THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

A Treatiſe
Vnfolding the whole dutie
of PRAYER.
Delivered
In fiue Sermons vpon 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 17.

By the late faithfull and worthy Miniſter of Ieſus Chriſt,

IOHN PRESTON,

Dr. in Divinity, Chaplaine in ordinary to his *Maieſty*, Maſter of *Emmanuel* Colledge in *Cambridge*, and ſometimes Preacher of *Lincolnes* Inne.

The fourth Edition, corrected.

The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Iames 5. 16.
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare my prayer, Pſal. 66. 18.

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TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader.

TO diſcourſe largely of the neceſſity and vſe of this peece of ſpirituall armour, after ſo many learned and vſefull Treatiſes, vpon this ſubiect, may ſeeme ſuperfluous, eſpecially conſidering that there is much ſpoken to this purpoſe, for thy ſatisfaction, in the inſuing Treatiſe; wherein, beſides the vnfolding of the nature of this dutie, (which is the Saints daily exerciſe) and ſtrong inforcement to it, there is an endeavour to giue ſatisfaction in the moſt incident caſes, want of clearing whereof is vſually an hindrance to the cheareful, and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath beene done by this Reverend and worthy man, we had rather ſhould appeare in the Treatiſe it ſelfe, to thy indifferent iudgement, then to bee much in ſetting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reaſon of the ſpirituall, and convincing manner of handling this Argument, it will winne acceptance with many, eſpecially conſidering, that it is of that nature, wherein, though much haue beene ſpoken, yet much more may be ſaid with good reliſh to thoſe that haue anie ſpirituall ſenſe: for it is the moſt ſpirituall action, wherein wee haue nearer communion with God, then in anie other holie performance, and whereby it

pleaſeth God *to conveigh all good to vs, to the performance whereof Chriſtians finde moſt backwardneſſe, and indiſpoſedneſſe, and from thence moſt deiection of ſpirit; which alſo in theſe times, is moſt neceſſarie, wherein, vnleſſe we fetch helpe from heaven, this way, wee ſee the Church and Cauſe of* God *like to be trampled vnder feete. Onelie, remember, that we let theſe Sermons paſſe forth as they were delivered by himſelfe, in publicke, without taking that libertie of adding or detracting, which, perhaps, ſome would haue thought meete: for wee thought it beſt that his owne meaning ſhould be expreſſed in his owne words and manner, eſpecially conſidering there is little which perhaps may ſeeme ſuperfluous to ſome, but may, by Gods bleſſing, be vſefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniences, in this kinde, if able men would bee perſwaded to publiſh their owne works in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good ſervice to the Church, when that defect is ſupplyed by giving ſome life to thoſe things, which otherwiſe would haue died of themſelues. The bleſſing of theſe labours of his we commend vnto* God, *& the benefit of them vnto thee, reſting*

Thine in our Lord Ieſus Chriſt,

RICHARD SIBBS.

IOHN DAVENPORT.

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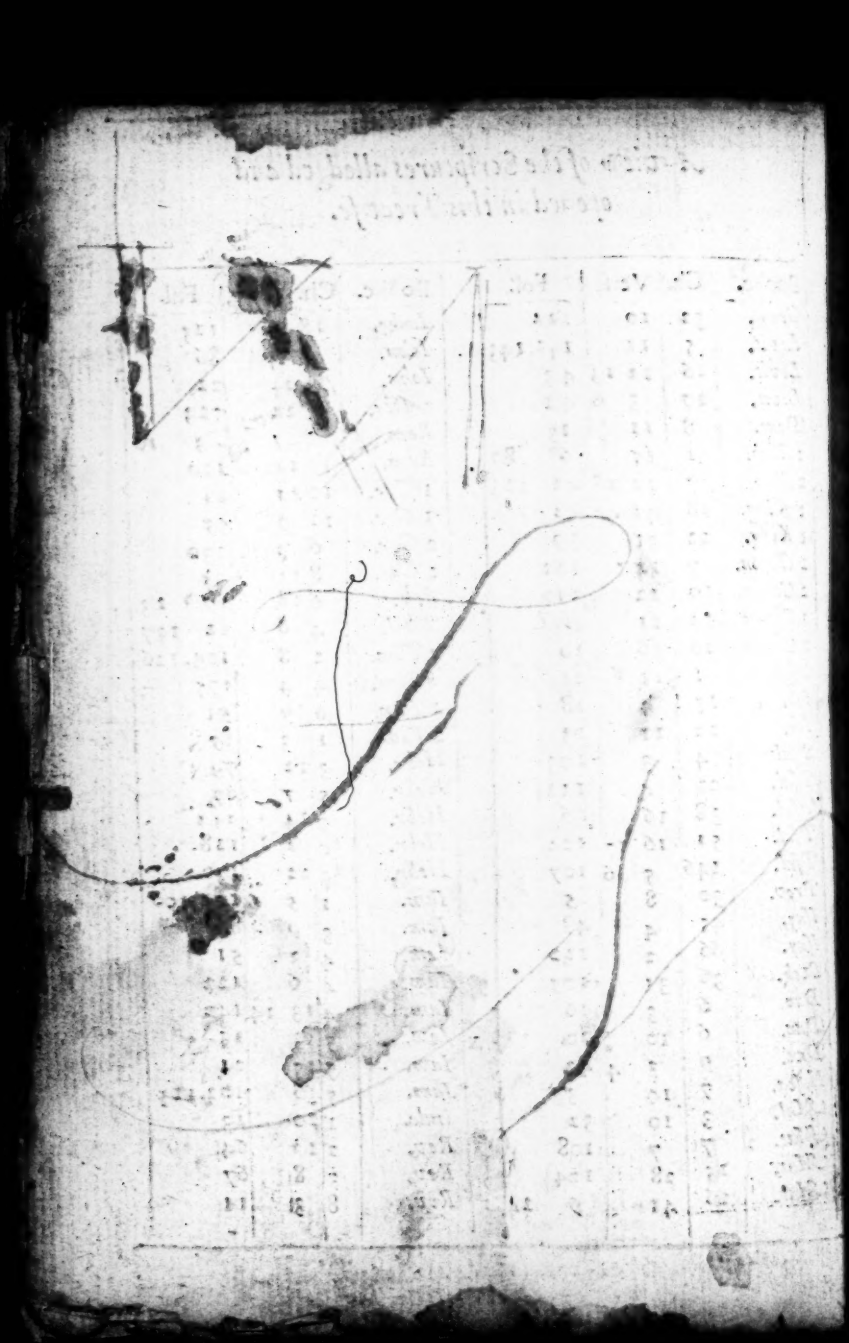
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THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

THE FIRST SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THE Apoſtle here, in the latter end of this Epiſtle, heapes vp many precepts together, and therefore we ſhall not neede to ſeeke out the dependance of theſe words from thoſe that go before, or thoſe that follow after. *Rejoyce evermore* (ſaith he) *Pray continually, In all things give thanks:*

thankes: for this is the will of God in Chriſt Ieſus to you wards.

We are now fallen upon this Text, where this duty of prayer is commended to vs, and it is a command from *God* himſelfe delivered ſhortly, as lawes are wont to be, without any great premiſes and reaſons, and indeed, having therfore the more authority in it.

Pray Continually.

3 Things conſiderable, for opening of the words.

IN the handling of which, wee will doe theſe three things.

Firſt, we will ſhew you what *Prayer is.*

Secondly, why the *Lord* requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the *Lord* knowes my wants well enough, he knowes my minde, and how I am affected? I, but yet the *Lord* will have vs to *pray*, and to aske before he will beſtow it upon us.

And laſtly, what it is to *pray continually.*

1. What prayer is.

1. In generall

For the firſt. If we would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would give you no more but this deſcription of it. *It is an expreſſion of the minde to the Lord:* ſometimes by words, ſometimes without words, but yet there muſt be an expreſſion, and ſome opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

2. In ſpeciall.

But now to know what a right *prayer* is, what ſuch a *prayer* is, as *God* accepts; you muſt have an other definition which muſt have more ingredients into it, and ſo, *prayer is*, nothing elſe but *an expreſſion, or offering of thoſe holy, and good diſpoſi-*

tions

tions to God, that arise from the Spirit, or the regenerate part, in the name of Iesus Christ. Where you are to observe this; That the *prayers*, which we make, are divided into one of these two sorts.

Division of prayers into two sorts.

I

First, some are such *prayers* as are the expressions of our owne spirits, the voice of our owne spirits, and there is nothing but flesh in them; such prayers as any naturall man may make to the *Lord*: And these the *Lord* regards not, hee knowes not the meaning of them, that is, hee doth not accept them.

Such as come from our owne spirits.

Note.

2

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voice of *Gods* owne Spirit, that is, such as arise from the regenerate part that is within us, which is quickened and inlarged to pray from the immediate helpe of the *holy Ghost*; these prayers are onely accepted: and of these it is said, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit*: that is, hee so knowes it, and sees it, that also he accepts it. Therefore you shall see in *Hosea* 7. 14, when they prayed, and prayed earnestly, yea they set a day apart for prayer, they called a solemne Assembly, and kept a fast, yet, saith the *Lord* plainely, *Ye did not call upon mee when you howled upon your beds*; *for*, (saith he) *you assembled your selves for corne, and for wine*, which any naturall man may doe: And therefore, (saith he) it is but an *howling*: It is the voice of beasts to seeke for wine, and oyle, and corne, but hee saith plainely, *You called not upon me*; when notwithstanding, they spent a whole day in prayer. But the meaning is, that the *Lord* regards this as no prayer at all.

Such as come from GODS Spirit.

Rom. 8 27.

Hosea 7. 14.

Prayers of wicked men howlings.

The termes of the deſcription opened.

And therefore, to open a little this deſcription unto you; for it is one maine buſineſſe that wee have to doe, in the handling of this Text; to deſcribe to you the meaning of this precept, what the nature of *prayer* is, that you may know what kind of *prayer* it is, that prevailes with *God*. I ſay, *It is an expreſſion of holy and good diſpoſitions*. I uſe that expreſſion, rather of *diſpoſitions* than *deſires*, becauſe there is ſome part of *prayer* that ſtands in thankſgiving, when you deſire nothing at *Gods* hands, but give thanks for that you have received; marke, firſt, that they muſt be *holy*, and *good*, the deſires and diſpoſitions muſt be good: for that is a rule, all the affections and deſires are good, or evill, according as their objects are; thoſe that are fixed upon good things, are good deſires.

1 Why he vſeth the word (diſpoſitions) rather, than deſires.

When the deſires and diſpoſitions of men are good.

Queſt.

You will ſay then, what are the good things that makes the deſires and diſpoſitions of the heart good?

Anſw. That temporall things may be deſired in a carnall manner, and carnal things in a ſpirituall manner and how.

They are temporall things, and ſpirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a ſpirituall manner, and the deſire may be good; And againe, hee may pray for ſpirituall things in a carnall manner, and the deſire may be naught. Therefore that muſt be obſerved withall, that it is not ſimply the object, but there is a certaine manner of deſiring too. For example, if a man pray for temporal things, for outward comforts, ſuch things as belong to the preſent eſtate of his body here; If he pray for them with theſe conditions, that he may have that which is convenient

ent for him, he prayes for ſuch a meaſure as *God* ſees to be meet, as *Pro.* 31. *Feed me with convenient food for me*; this prayer is good. But (*if any man will be rich*, as 1 *Tim* 6.) it is an inordinate deſire, when men will have exceſſe of theſe outward things, and more than is fit for them. And againe, if you deſire, that which is *convenient*, and *ſpend it upon your luſts*; if you deſire health, and long life, that you may liue more pleaſantly; if you deſire wealth, that you may liue more deliciouſly, and not ſimply that which the creature may deſire, and to the end that you may be the more inabled to ſerue the *Lord* in theſe things, your deſire is not good. So I ſay, firſt it muſt be for that which is *convenient*; ſecondly, you muſt not *ſpend it upon your luſts*, but in *Gods* ſervice.

Prov. 30. 8.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

when the deſire of outward things is good.

And laſtly, we muſt pray for them in a right method, *Firſt the Kingdome of God, and then other things*, that is, ſet a price on them, as you ought, not too high a price, but value them aright. We ſhould ſo pray for outward things, as our prayers may be ſpirituall. On the other ſide, a man may pray for ſpirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a ſpirituall manner. A naturall man may pray earneſtly for faith, and for grace, and repentance, not out of any beautie that he ſees in them, not out of any taſte and reliſh that he hath of them, but becauſe hee thinkes them a bridge to leade him to heaven, and that he cannot come thither without them: when he conſiders in his heart that hee cannot be ſaved without theſe things, I ſay, then he may

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

Spira his caſe.

deſire them, and deſire them earneſtly. It was the caſe of *Francis Spira*, who cryed ſo earneſtly for grace, that he might have but a drop of it, becauſe he could not be ſaved without it, he gives the reaſon himſelfe; he ſaid withall, he ſaw no excellencie in it, he deſired it not for it ſelfe, and therefore he thought his prayers ſhould not be heard. Thus you ſee that prayer is an *expreſſion of holy and good deſires*, and it is *an offering them up to the Lord.*

Theſe deſires muſt be offered to God.

I will not ſtand upon that (you are well enough inſtructed in it) that whatſoever petition is made to the creature, it is not a prayer, it muſt onely be offered up to the *Lord.*

Ariſing from the ſpirit, or regenerate part.

Then I adde, it is ſuch as muſt *ariſe from the regenerate part*, that is, looke how much there is of the *regenerate part* in a prayer, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, looke how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, ſo farre it is ſanctified, ſo farre that prayer is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we will ſhew you it by ſome other expreſſions of prayer, that we finde in the Scriptures.

Expreſſions of prayer in the Scriptures.

1 Sam 1. 15.

It is called a *lifting up of the heart to God, a pouring forth of the ſoule to the Lord*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. *A ſerving of him in ſpirit*, ſo *Paul* calleth it. Now if we open theſe phraſes to you a little, you ſhall know more fully wherein the nature of right praying to *God* conſiſts. That phraſe the Apoſtle uſeth, *Whom I ſerve in my ſpirit*, (it is the ſame word in the originall that is uſed for faſting and prayer)

prayer.) Now what is that to pray to *God* in the ſpirit? for we may ſay, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his minde goes to it, and every man what ſervice ſoever he performes his ſpirit muſt needes have a hand in it, ſo that it cannot be performed without the minde.

I take this to be the meaning of it, the Apoſtle his ſcope, is to diſtinguiſh the true and holy ſervices of *God* from thoſe that are but ſhadowes, and counterfeit, that are but the body and carcaſſe of right ſervice. Therefore, when he ſaith, *I ſerue the Lord in my ſpirit*, or, *I pray in the ſpirit*; the meaning is this, when the prayer of a man is not onely that which the underſtanding dictates to him, but when the whole ſoule, the will and affections goe together with his petition, and whatſoever the petition is, a mans heart is affected accordingly. As for example, if a man come to confeſſe his ſinnes, and yet ſleights them inwardly in his heart; if a man pray for reconciliation with *God*, and yet have no longing and ſighing in his heart after it, if hee earneſtly aske grace, and the mortification of ſinfull luſts, when the heart doth not inwardly ſeeke it, now hee prayes not in the ſpirit. To pray in the ſpirit is as that in *Ioh.* 4. 24. *He will be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth.* The meaning is, ſo to pray, that the heart goe together with our petition; alſo, this is the meaning of that when a man powreth forth his ſoule before the LORD. So *Hannah* ſaith of her ſelfe; *I am a woman troubled, &c. and powre out my ſoule before the Lord.* That is, when a man delivers

To ſerve God in the ſpirit, what.

Iohn 4. 24.

To powre out the ſoule to God, what.

to *God* that which the underſtanding and minde hath deviſed; (for prayer is not a worke of wit, or of memorie) but when a man powreth forth his whole ſoule (that is) his will, and affections, when they goe together, when there is no reſervation in his minde; but when all within him is opened and explicate, and expoſed to the view of the *Lord*; not as *Auſtin* ſaith of himſelfe, when he came to pray for the mortifying of his luſts, ſaith he, *I had a ſecret inward deſire that it ſhould not be done.* Therefore when the *ſoule is powred forth*, the meaning is, that all be opened to him; ſo that when a man will make an acceptable prayer, hee muſt make this accompt, he muſt then call in all his thoughts and affections, and recollect them together as the lines in the center, or as the Sunne beames in a burning glaſſe, and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwiſe it is but a cold and diſſipated thing, that hath no ſtrength or efficacie in it.

Auſtin.

Simile.

Now withall, this you muſt know, that when wee ſay the whole ſoule muſt goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will and affections be imployed, (for in a naturall man, in his deſire of health, when he is ſicke or wanteth aſſiſtance and guidance in difficult caſes, not onely the underſtanding, but the will and affections are buſie enough, it is likely) and therefore we adde this further, that that which is called the ſpirit, which is diffuſed in the whole ſoule, that it be ſet on worke in the performance of this holy duty to the *Lord*, whenſoever wee ſeeke to him in prayer.

Note.

For

For this you know, that there are two things in a regenerate man, (for that you muſt take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to *God*, ſeeing there is no Spirit in him, but in the regenerate man) there is, I ſay, fleſh and ſpirit: now when we come to powre forth our heart to the LORD, that which lyes uppermoſt will be ready to be powred forth firſt; and that which is ſpirituall, it may be, lyes in the bottome, and that is kept in, and ſo a man may make a carnall prayer, though he be a holy man; that is, when the fleſh hath gotten the vpper hand, as in ſome fits it may; when the mind is filled with worldly ſorrow, and worldly rejoycing, and worldly deſires, and theſe would be expreſſed to the *Lord*; It is a prayer that the *Lord* regards not, though the man bee holy, from whence it comes: but right prayer is this; when the regenerate part is acted and ſtirred vp, and the fleſh that hinders, muſt be removed. For you know this, that whereſoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptneſſe in that to call vpon *God*; and it cannot be diſjoyned from it, but that is not alwayes in act. As we ſee a fountaine, it hath alwayes an aptnes to powre forth water, it is ready to breake into a current, but if it be ſtopped with ſtones and mud, and other impediments, it cannot breake out: ſo he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptneſſe to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour ſaith, *Mat.* 26. 41. *The ſpirit is willing*, that is, there is alwayes a willingneſſe

Two things in a man regenerate,

No naturall man can make an acceptable prayer.

A holy man may make a carnall prayer.

Right prayer what.

Simile.

An aptneſſe in the regenerate part to prayer. *Mat.* 26. 41.

How the ſpirit helpes our infirmities.

Rom. 8.27.

Simile.

neſſe that followes the ſpirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man, but, ſaith he, *the fleſh is backward*, that is, it ſtops this fountaine, and therefore *Rom.* 8,27. *The Spirit* is ſaid there to *helpe our infirmities, and to make our requeſts for us*; that is, even as a man removes ſtones from a fountaine with his hands, and when he hath done that, it breakes out into a current, ſo the *holy Ghoſt* removes this fleſh, that ſtops up this current, the ſpirit takes away thoſe carnall impediments that are in us: and not onely ſo, but ſtirreth up the regenerate part; and when that is done, we are able to make a ſpirituall prayer unto *God* in *Chriſt Ieſus*; So that is the thing that you are now to obſerve, that the Spirit muſt helpe our infirmities, when wee come to call upon *God*, and our prayers be ſo farre acceptable as they be the fruites of the regenerate part; now wee want but one thing to adde in the definition.

Offered up in the name of Ieſus Chriſt.

They are ſuch prayers as are offered to God in the name of Ieſus Chriſt.

2 Chron. 26.

This is a thing that you all know, that thoſe prayers that are not offered up in *Chriſt*, are not acceptable, becauſe the perſon is not regarded. It was the ſinne of *Vzziah* in 2 *Chron.* 26. Hee would goe to the Temple himſelfe being a King on the throne, and he would offer incenſe without a Prieſt. We doe the very ſelfe ſame thing whenſoever we go to offer up any prayer to *God* without *Ieſus Chriſt*; In the olde law men might bring their ſacrifices, but ſtill the Prieſt muſt offer them; ſo muſt we here; and the reaſon is given,

ven, *Revel.* 8. becauſe the prayers that come from us ſavour of the fleſh, from which they come: and the *Angel* of the Covenant *mingleth much incenſe with them*, and makes them ſweet and acceptable to *God*, *with much incenſe*, that is, as the fleſh is more, ſo there needes more incenſe, that they may be made acceptable to *God* the Father. So that we have indede a double interceſſour; one is, *the Spirit that helpes our infirmities*, that helpes us to make our petitions, that quickens, and enlargeth our hearts to prayer: The other is the interceſſour to make them acceptable to *God*, that he may receive them, and not refuſe and reject them. So much ſhall ſerve for the firſt thing, to ſhew you what the dutie is, what a right, true, and acceptable prayer is.

Revel. 8. Why wee muſt offer our prayers in Chriſts name.

Interceſſour double.

Now for the ſecond, *why we muſt pray*, (for that objection a man may make) the *Lord* knowes my minde well enough, and what needes ſuch an expreſſion of it by prayer? The reaſons briefly why the *Lord* will have us to pray, are taken;

2 Why the Lord will have us to pray, ſeeing he knowes our wants.

Partly from himſelfe.

And partly from us.

1. From himſelfe, though he be willing to beſtow mercies upon us, yet he will have us ask his leave before he doth it. As, you know, fathers do with their children, though they intend to beſtow ſuch things upon them, as are needfull, yet they will have their children to ask them, & as it is a common thing among men, though they be willing a man ſhould paſſe through their ground, yet they will have leave asked, becauſe by that meanes

1 In reſpect of himſelfe. *Simile.*

Simile.

To acknowledge his property in his gifts.

meanes the property is acknowledged, otherwiſe it would be taken as a common high way, ſo the *Lord* will have his ſervants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property he hath in thoſe gifts he beſtowes upon them: Indeede otherwiſe wee would forget in what tenure we hold theſe bleſſings we enjoy, and what ſervice we owe to the *Lord*, as you know there is an homage due to the *Lord*, that the *Lord* might be acknowledged; ſo the *Lord* will haue this dutie of prayer performed, that we may acknowledge him, that we hold all of him, and that we might remember the ſervice that we ought to doe him, to riſe and goe at his command, that is, to doe his ſervice, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accuſtomed to the duty of calling on him.

Simile.

2 To honour him.

Likewiſe he will have it done for his honours ſake, he will have men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewiſe that others might be ſtirred up to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The ſervants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their Lord, they ſtirre up thoſe that are lookers on: And as the Schoolemen ſay of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellencie in him, (for that he may have, and yet be without glory) but glory is an oſtentation, a ſhewing out of that excellencie. It is the phraſe that is uſed in the Sacrament; you ſhall celebrate the Sacrament that you may *ſhew forth the Lords death*; ſo the *Lord* will have us come and call upon

Simile.

Glory what.

on his name to shew forth the duty of prayer, and that we may shew forth his glory. This is for the LORD himselfe.

2 In respect of our selues.

Now for our selues, we are to doe it, partly,

1 That the graces in vs may be increased.

that the graces of his Spirit may be increased in vs: for prayer exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in prayer, and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in *Iude* 20. *That you may edifie your selues in the holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost*; as if he should say, the way to edifie your selues, and build up your selues, is to pray in the *holy Ghost*; that is, spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the *holy Ghost*: Every such prayer builds vs up, it increaseth every grace in vs, faith, and repentance, and loue, and obedience, and feare, all are increased by prayer.

Iude 20.

2 To exercise grace.

Partly, because they are exercised and set on worke in prayer; for the very exercise increaseth them.

3 To bring vs to communion with God.

And partly also, because prayer brings vs to Communion with *God*. Now, if good company increase grace, how much more will Communion with the *Lord* himselfe quicken and increase it?

4 To avoide strangenes with God.

Moreover, this duty is requyred, that we may be acquainted with *God*, for there is a strangenes betweene the *Lord* and vs, when we doe not call upon his name. It is the command which you shall finde in *Iob.* 22. *Acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou mayst have peace with him, and thou shalt have prosperity*. Now, you know how acquaintance

Iob. 22. 21.

Simile. How acquaintance is gotten and loſt.

quaintance growes amongſt men; it is by converſing together, by ſpeaking one to another. On the other ſide, we ſay, when that is broken off, when they ſalute not, when they ſpeake not together, a ſtrangeneſſe growes; ſo it is in this: when we come to the *Lord*, and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling upon him, wee grow acquainted with him, and without it wee grow ſtrangers, and the *Lord* dwells afarre off, we are not able to behold him, except wee be accuſtomed to it, and the more wee come into his preſence, the more wee are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reaſon why we ſhould uſe this, that we may get acquaintance with the *Lord*.

5 To teach us thankfulneſſe.

Likewiſe, that we may learne to be thankefull to him for thoſe mercies we have received from him; for, if *God* ſhould beſtow mercies upon us unasked, we would forget them, his hand would not be acknowledged in them; and wee would not ſee his providence in diſpoſing thoſe bleſſings that we doe enjoy; but when wee come to aske every thing before him, we are then readie to ſee his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are diſpoſed to more thankefulneſſe. So that it is a ſure rule commonly, What we winne with prayer, that wee weare with thankefulneſſe, and that which we get without prayer, wee ſpend, and uſe without any lifting up of the heart to *God*, in praiſing him, and acknowledging his hand in beſtowing it upon us: ſo you ſee what this duty is. And,

Note. What wee get without prayer, is ſpent unthankfully.

Secondly,

Secondly, why the *Lord* will have this duty performed.

Now, Thirdly, (in a word) what is it to *pray continually?* The word in the originall ſignifieth, ſuch a performance of this duty, that you doe not ceaſe to doe it, at ſuch times as GOD requyres it at your hands. Compare this with that in the ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*, 1, 3. The Apoſtle ſaith there, that he hath him in *continuall remembrance, praying for him night and day*, where the ſame word is vſed that is here. Now we cannot thinke that the Apoſtle had *Timothy* in continuall remembrance, that he was never out of his thought, but the meaning is, when he did call vpon GOD, from day to day, he ſtill remembred him. So that to *pray continually*, is to pray very much, to pray at thoſe times when *God* requyres vs to pray. For it is the definition that Philoſophers give of idlenes, a man is then ſayd to be idle, when he doth not that which he ought, in the time when it is requyred of him. He is an idle man that workes not, when he ought to worke; ſo he is ſayd not to pray continually, that prayes not when hee ought to pray. So that I conceive this to be the meaning of the Apoſtle, *Rejoyce evermore*, (ſaith he) but when hee comes to this exhortation of prayer, he contents not himſelfe to ſay, pray very often, but pray continually, as wee vſe to expreſſe our ſelves when wee would have a thing frequently done, wee ſay, ſee that you be alwayes doing of this. So the Apoſtles ſcope is to

3. What it is to pray continually.

Ἀδιαλείπτως.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

Idleneſſe, what

to ſhew that it ſhould bee exceeding often, and that it ſhould be very much done. Hence wee gather this by the way, that wee are bound to keepe our conſtant courſe of calling vpon GOD, at the leaſt twice a day, whatſoever we doe more.

Obſ. A conſtant courſe of prayer, at leaſt twice a day is our duty

Queſt. But you will ſay, What ground have you for that, why doe you inſtance in that twice a day?

Anſw. The grounds of it.

The ground of it is this, when the Apoſtle bids us *pray continually*, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the leaſt we can doe it is twice a day, we may doe it oftener, but that, I ſay, is the leaſt. When wee have ſuch a command as this, when we have ſuch a precept as this, *pray continually*, and this rule illuſtrated by ſuch examples as we have in the Scripture, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kinde that is ſaid of the generall example, 1 *Cor.* 10. *They are written for our learning?* When it is ſaid that *David* prayed oft, and *Daniel* expreſly in *Dan.* 6. 3. *He prayed three times a day*, that was his conſtant courſe, I ſay, we may thinke we are bound to doe it at the leaſt twice a day. Conſider a little the reaſon of it why we are bound to doe it; In the *Temple*, you know the *Lord* was worſhipped twiſe a day, there was *the morning and the evening ſacrifice*. What was the ground of that commandement? There was no reaſon of it, but that the *Lord* might be worſhipped, and that was the time that he would have it done twice a day, morning and evening: but beſides that, it was not onely that

1. From the text,

2. From examples.

Dan. 6. 3

3 Fourm reaſons.

1 That God might be worſhipped.

that the *Lord* might be worſhipped, (wherein we ſhould follow that example of worſhipping him morning and evening.) But likewiſe our occaſions are ſuch, that that is the leaſt we can doe to call upon him conſtantly morning and evening: for there is no day but we uſe many bleſſings, and we take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leave; ſo that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a bleſſing upon them, or elſe thou haſt no right to them, thou haſt no lawfull uſe of them: that place is plaine, 1 *Tim.* 4. *Every Creature of God is good, and ought not to be refuſed, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is ſanctified by prayer.* So that, if you take common bleſſings every day, and doe not ſeeke them at the *Lords* hands before you take them, they are not ſanctified unto you, you have not a lawful uſe of them, you have no right unto them.

2 That we may uſe bleſſings aright.

1 Tim 4.4.

Beſides, my *Beloved*, it is that which the *Lord* commands in every thing, *Make your requeſts knowne in every thing*, that is, whenſoever you neede any thing, make your requeſts knowne; ſo *in every thing give thankes*. And therefore the leaſt we can doe when we have received, and doe need ſo many mercies, is to give thankes, and to ſeeke to him ſo often, from day to day.

3 From Gods command.

Moreover, doe not our hearts need it, are they not ready to goe out of order, are they not ready to contract hardneſſe, are they not ready to goe from the *Lord*, and to be hardened from *Gods* feare? Therefore this duty is needfull, in that re-

4 To keepe our hearts in order.

gard, to compose them, and bring them backe againe in order.

5 To get forgiveneſſe of daily ſinnes.

Moreover, doe not the ſinnes we commit daily, put a neceſſity upon us, of doing this, that they may be forgiven, and done away, and that wee may be reconciled to *God* againe? Therefore doe not thinke that it is an arbitrary thing to call upon *God* twice a day, becauſe there is no particular expreſſe command; for if you conſider theſe places that I have named, and the reaſons, wee ſhall ſee there is a neceſſitie lyes upon us to doe it. So much ſhall ſerve for that, I come now to make ſome uſe of this that hath beene delivered.

Vſe 1. Shewing the miſery of wicked men, in that they cannot pray.

Firſt, in that ſuch prayers, as the *Lord* accepts, are an expreſſion of holy deſires, ſuch deſires as riſe from the regenerate part of a man: Hence then we ſee that all naturall men are in a miſerable condition, when times of extremity come, & when the day of death comes, when there is no helpe in the world, but ſeeking to the *Lord*, when all the creatures forſake them, and are not able to helpe them, and there is no way to goe to the *Lord* but by prayer; if prayer be an effect, & fruit of the regenerate part of a man, a carnall man is not able to helpe himſelfe, he is in a miſerable condition. Therefore let men conſider this that put all off to times of extreamitie. Put the caſe, thou haſt warning enough, at ſuch a time; put the caſe thou haſt the uſe of thy underſtanding, yet thou art not able to doe any good without this: for, if there be not grace in the heart, thou art

Note.

not

not able to make a ſpirituall prayer to the *Lord*, that the *Lord* accepts. Therefore take heede of deferring, and putting off; labour to be regenerate, to have your hearts renewed, while you have time, and if thou be not able to call upon *God* in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it when thy wits, and thy ſpirits are ſpent, and loſt, and in the times of ſickneſſe and extreamitie? Therefore let that be conſidered, which we doe but touch by the way briefly.

Vſe 2.

Secondly, if the *Lord* command this, if it be the command of *God, Pray continually:* Then take heede of neglecting this duty, rather be exhorted to be frequent, and fervent in it, to *continue therein, and watch thereto with all perſeverance.* It is a common fault amongſt us, either we are ready to omit it, or to come to it unwillingly, or elſe we performe it in a careleſſe, and negligent manner, not conſidering, what a command lyeth upon the ſons of men to performe it conſtantly, and conſcionably. I beſeech you conſider this, that it is a priviledge purchaſed by the blood of *Ieſus Chriſt*, *Chriſt* dyed for this end, it coſt him the ſhedding of his blood, *That we through him, might have entrance to the throne of grace:* and will you let ſuch a priviledge as this lye ſtill? If you doe, ſo farre as is in you, you cauſe his blood to be ſhed in vaine: for, if you neglect the priviledges gotten by that blood, ſo far you neglect the blood, that procured them; but to neglect this duty, is to neglect that. Beſides, if we aske you the reaſon, why you abſtain from other ſins, why you

Eph. 6.

Morives to prayer.

Chriſt dyed for this end.

2

It is Gods command.

you ſteale not, why you commit not adultery, and murther; The reaſon that you give, is, becauſe the LORD hath commanded you. Hath not the LORD commanded you to pray conſtantly, at all times? If you make conſcience of one commandement, why doe you not of anoother?

3 The example of Saints. Dan. 6. 10.

Conſider *Daniel* in this caſe, in the 6. of *Daniel*, he would not omit a conſtant courſe of prayer, he did it three times a day, and that was his ordinary cuſtome. If he would not omit it to ſpare his life, if hee would not omit it in ſuch a caſe of danger as that, why will you omit it for buſineſſe, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth or pelfe, or pompe, or pleaſure, or whatſoever may draw you from that dutie?

4 The equity of it.

Doe but conſider what an unreaſonable, and what an unequall thing it is, that when the *Lord* gives us meate and drinke, and cloathes, from day to day, when he gives us ſleepe every night, when he provides for us ſuch comforts, as wee have neede of, as there is not the leaſt creature that doth us any ſervice, but as farre as he ſets it on worke to doe that ſervice; for us to forget him, and not to give him thankes, and not to aske theſe things at his hands, not to ſeeke unto him, but to live as *without God in the world*, as we doe, when we neglect this duty: I ſay, it is a profeſſion of living without *God* in the world; wee are ſtrangers to him, it is open rebellion againſt him. Therefore take heede of omitting it, take heede of neglecting it. Beſides

Beſides all this, wee ſhould doe it for our owne ſakes, if we conſider what uſe we have of this duty for our ſelves. Is it not the key that openeth all *Gods* treaſures? When heaven was ſhut up, was not this the key that opened? When the wombes were ſhut up, was not this it that opened? You know, *Eliah prayed for raine*; ſo we may ſay for every other bleſſing. All *Gods* treaſures are locked up, to thoſe that doe not call upon his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatſoever they be that we have occaſion to uſe, this is effectuall; it doth it better than any thing beſides. If a man be ſicke, I will be bold to ſay it, a faithfull prayer is more able to heale his diſeaſe than the beſt medicine; *The prayer of faith ſhall heale the ſicke, Iam.* 5. You know, the woman that had the bloody iſſue, when ſhe had ſpent all upon Phyſitians, and could doe no good, then ſhe comes to Chriſt, and offered a faithfull prayer to him, that did it, when ſo many yeares phyſicke could not doe it. *Beloved*, if there be a Prince, or a great man, whoſe minde we would have turned towards us, a faithfull prayer will doe it ſooner than the beſt friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his requeſt, that the *Lord* would *give him favour in the ſight of the man*; if we be in any ſtrait, as it was in *Ioſephs* caſe, if we have any difficult matter to bring to paſſe, this prayer and ſeeking to the *Lord*, will expedite, and ſet us at libertie ſooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more than all the wits in the world; becauſe it ſets *God* on worke. You have no power to doe any thing.

5 The benefit of it.

Prayer the key to unlocke *Gods* treaſures.

Iames 5.

Nehem. 1. 11.

Prayer prevalent.

Certainly a praying Chriſtian that is prevalent and potent with *God*, (that ſeekes to him) he is able to doe more than all the witches in the world, they ſet the divell a worke; but prayer ſets *God* a worke, it ſets him a worke to doe us good, and to heale us, and to deliver us out of extremities: and therefore, I ſay, for our owne ſakes, even out of ſelfe-love, and for common comforts, you have neede to uſe this. Certainly, if theſe things were beleeved, (but you heare them, you give us the hearing for the time, but if they were beleeved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be ſo negligent in it, or come in ſo careleſſe a manner to it.

6

It is the beſt way to fill the heart with ioy.

Beſides this, I beſeech you to conſider this, every man deſires joy and comfort, & commonly one thing that keepes us off from this duty, is ſports and pleaſures, one thing or other, that we take delight in, which dampe and hinder us in theſe things, in ſpirituall performances: Prayer is the beſt way of all other to fill thy heart with

Ioh. 1 6. 24. joy, as we ſee in *Ioh.* 16.24: he ſaith there, *In my name you have asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your joy may be full.* This is one motive that *Chriſt* uſeth to exhort us to bee frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full: This I take to be

Iames 5. 13. the meaning of that of *Iames* 5: *If any man be ſad, let him pray*, not onely becauſe prayer is ſutable to ſuch a diſpoſition, but likewiſe it will cheere him up, it is the way to get comfort; *If any be ſad, let him pray.* So it is in *Phil.* 4. 6. *In all things*

Phil. 4. 6. *make your requeſts knowne, and the peace of God ſhall keepe*

keepe you in the communion of Iesus Christ: That is it that brings peace, and quietnesse; and therefore there is much reason, why we should be constant in this duty, it is that which quickens us, it is that which fills us with joy, and comfort, and with peace, which is that every one desires.

7 Our safety consists in it.

Moreover, consider it is thy buckler, prayer is the helmet that keepes thee safe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to goe to *God* by prayer, when he once shewes himselfe to be a stranger to the *Lord* by neglecting this duty, then hee is out of the pales of his protection, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes; for so is the *Lord* to those that pray, the *Lord* is a protection to those that call upon his name. The very calling upon his name is a running under *Gods* wings, as it were, that is, a putting our selves under his shadow; but when thou neglectest that, thou wandrest abroad from him. Now doe we not neede protection from outward danger, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of sinne and temptation? Surely prayer is one part of the *spirituall Armour*, as we see *Eph.* 6: In the *compleat Armor of God*, *prayer* is reckoned up the last, as that that buckles up all the rest; saith the Apostle, *Continue in prayer, and watch to it with perseverancce*. And you have the more reason to do it, because it is not only a part of this armour, but it enables you to use all the rest, to use the word, & to use faith; for prayer stirs them up all. What is it to have Armour, and not to have it ready? now prayer makes it ready. Therfore you

Eph. 6.

Praier teacheth to use the rest of the spiritual armour.

Mat.26.41.

ſee *Chriſt* preſcribes the ſame rule in *Mat.*26.41: *Pray that ye enter not into temptation:* as if that were the way to ſecure us, and to ſhelter us, and to keepe us ſafe from falling into temptation. It is a thing I would adviſe you to, to pray, and to ſeeke to the *Lord* continually. Therefore, if we ſhould uſe onely this reaſon to you, to be conſtant in this duty, becauſe it is for your ſafety, it were ſufficient. You know when a man is *as a Citty whoſe walls are broken downe,* when hee lyes expoſed to temptation, he is in a dangerous caſe. So I may uſe this *Dilemma* to you, If you have a diſpoſition, if you thinke thus, I hope I am well enough, I hope my heart is in a temper good enough, I am not now expoſed to any temptation, I feare nothing, make this argument againſt thy ſelfe, Why doe I neglect ſo good a gale, if my heart be ſo well diſpoſed to pray, why doe I then omit it it? Againe, if there be any indiſpoſition in me, why doe I hazard my ſelfe? what if Sathan ſhould ſet upon thee? what if the world ſhould ſet upon thee? what if a ſutable temptation agreeable to thy luſts be offered? art thou not in danger? and therefore a conſtant courſe ſhould be kept in it, we ſhould take heed of being negligent in it. And will a man now profeſſe that hee hopes he is the ſervant of *God*, and in a good eſtate, although he do not pray ſo much as others, (we ſpeak not of frequency ſimply, but of ſuch a performance as is required) I ſay, to profeſſe that thou art a ſervant of *Chriſt*, and that thou loveſt him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou art

Note.

Wee cannot love Chriſt, but wee muſt call upon him.

art his ſervant, and yet thou calleſt not upon him from day to day, this is an idle thing, it is impoſſible; if thou diddeſt love him, thou wouldeſt expreſſe thy ſelfe in calling upon his name. Shall a friend that is but an acquaintance to us, in whom wee delight, come to us, and wee are willing to ſpend many houres with him; and ſhall we profeſſe our ſelves to be friends of *God*, and him to be a friend of us, and that we delight in him, and yet neglect this duty? This is a common thing amongſt you, when you ſee a man that meditates all his matters himſelfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to ſome bodie elſe, it muſt bee ſuch an one as profeſſeth to be a friend to him; now if this friend ſhould never heare from him, nor hee ſhould never ſpeake to him, or if hee doe, it is in ſuch a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not truſt him, hee doth not regard what he can doe for him, and he doth it ſo ſhortly, that hee can ſcarcely tell what the buſineſſe is; I ſay, in ſuch a caſe, would you not reckon his profeſſion of friendſhip to be an idle, and empty profeſſion? Now apply it to thy ſelf, thoſe that ſay they have communion with *God*, and they hope their eſtate is good enough, they ſtand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any neceſſity, for all the matters and occaſions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themſelves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to *God*, they doe it negligently, they poſt over the matter, ſo as they have

Simile.

If we be friends of God, wee muſt acquaint him with our ſtate by prayer.

have ſcarce leiſure to expreſſe themſelves and their doings; doe you thinke hee will take ſuch for friends? and doe you thinke, that this is a true, ſound and hearty profeſſion? Therefore (to end this) I beſeech you conſider it, and take heede of being remiſſe, and negligent in it; you ſee it is a command from the *Lord*,

Pray continually.

And ſo much for this time.

FINIS.



THE

THE SECOND SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NOt to repeate what hath beene delivered, but to preſſe this point on us a little further, (for what is more neceſſary, than that wee ſhould keepe a conſtant courſe in this duty, ſince the very life of Religion conſiſts in it?) I adde this to all I preſſed in the morning, that if you do neglect it, it expoſeth you to great diſadvantage, both for the outward man, and for the inward man; and there are but theſe two that you neede to care for.

8 The omiſſion of it doth diſadvantage men.

For

1 In the outward man.

For the outward man, it deprives you of the blessings: put the case, you have never so good successe in your enterprizes; put the case you have outward comforts in abundance, yet still the blessing is wanting; and not onely so, but it uncovers the roofe, as it were, and the curse is rained downe upon your tables, upon your meat and drinke, upon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. We consider not what we doe, when we neglect this duty, what dangers we expose our selves unto from day to day; for it is one thing to have outward comforts, and another thing to have the blessing with them.

Simile.

2 In the inward man.

Besides, consider what losse you suffer in the inward man, when you neglect this duty at any time; for that is ready to be distempered, and to goe out of order, it is ready to contract hardnesse, to contract soile; spirituall grace is ready to decay. It falls out with mans heart, as it doth with a garden that is neglected; it will quickly be overrunne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it, and the way to looke to it is constancy in this duty. That is a notable place, *Iob* 15.4: when *Eliphaz* observed some distemper in *Iobs* affections (as he apprehended it) he tells him that the speech hee vsed was not comely, but vaine, and sinfull: and what then? *Surely Iob* (saith hee) *thou restrainest prayer from the Lord:* As if he should say, it is impossible, *Iob*, that thou shouldest fall into these distempers, if thou diddest keepe thy course constantly in this duty; therefore

Simile.

Iob 15.4.

fore surely, saith he, thou restraineſt prayer from the *Lord*; So it is with us, let us restraine prayer from *God*, and distempers will arise quickly in our spirits, worldly-mindednesse will be readie to grow upon us, wee shall be apt to be carnall, we shall forget *God*, and forget our selves, and forget the good purposes, and desires wee had: and therefore that you may keepe your hearts in order, you must keepe a constant course in this dutie: for if you doe, (though your peace be interrupted) this will repaire it againe, it will make up the breaches againe, though there be some distempered affections, that grow upon us, yet prayer will compose all. As sleepe composeth drunkennesse, so prayer will compose the affections, a man may pray himselfe sober againe, nothing doth it sooner, nothing doth it more effectually; and this you shall finde, that as you, either omit it, or slight it over, so you shall finde a proportionable weakenesse growing upon the inward man, as the body feeles, when it neglecteth either sleepe, or dyet, or exercise: therefore, to end this exhortation, let us be constant in it.

Inward distempers arise, if prayer be neglected.

Simile.

Onely remember this, (when we exhort you thus to keepe a constant course, for which you heard so many reasons in the morning, I say, remember this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a customary, and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the *Lord* takes not our prayers by number, but by waight: when it is an outward picture, a dead carcasse

Wee were as good not pray at all, as doe it in a formall overly manner.

carcasse of prayer, when there is no life, no fervency in it, hee regards it not. Be not deceived in this, it is a very usuall deceit, it may bee a mans conscience would bee upon him, if hee should omit it altogether; and therefore when he doth something, his heart is satisfied, and so hee growes worse and worse: therefore, consider, that the very doing of the dutie, is not that which the *Lord* heedes, but hee will have it so performed, that the end may be obtained, and that the thing may be effected, for which you pray. If a man send his servant to goe to such a place, it is not his going to and fro that he regards, but hee would have him to dispatch the businesse; so in all other workes, hee cares not for the formality of performance, but would have the thing so done, that it may be of use to him: If you set a servant to make a fire for you, and he goe, and lay some greene wood together, and perhaps put a few coales under, this is not to make a fire for you, but he must, either get dry wood, or he must blow till it burne, and be fit for use: so when your hearts are unfit, when they are like greene wood, when you come to warme them, and to quicken them by prayer to *God*, it may be you post over this duty, and leave your hearts as colde, and as distempered as they were before: My *Beloved*, this is not to performe this duty. This duty is effectually performed, when your hearts are wrought upon by it, and when they are brought to a better tune, and to a better temper than they were before. If you finde

When prayer is performed aright.

Simile.

Simile.

Prayer in a customary manner amends not the heart.

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to expostulate the thing before the *Lord*, and not to give over, till you have set all the wheeles of your soule right, till you have made your hearts perfect with *God*; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off; if you finde a deadnesse, and unaptnes, and indisposition in you, you must lift up your soules to the *Lord*, and not give over till you be quickened; and this is to performe the dutie in such a manner as the *Lord* accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the dutie goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke, and zealous manner: for hee that omits it altogether is a profane person, and hee that performes it zealously, and to purpose, is an holy man; but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but hee will not doe it throughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou hast slubbered over this dutie from day to day, that thou performest it in a negligent manner, and perfunctorily, know that it is an hypocriticall performance; and therefore when we spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this dutie, still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may have heate, and life in it, that it may be acceptable to *God*, and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of grace,

What we must doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie, what.

Note.

grace, and to a better temper, than, it may bee, you found them in, when you went about the dutie.

1 *Object.* This duty requireth much time.

And if you object now, I, but it will coſt us much time to doe this?

Anſw. Threefold.

1 *Anſw.* The time ſpent in prayer hindreth not.

Indeed, one common cauſe, among all the reſt, that keepes us off from the thorow performance of this duty, is this: but (to ſpeake to that in a word) remember this, that the time that is ſpent in calling upon *God*, hinders you not in your buſineſſe, though it ſeeme to hinder you, and though it takes ſo much from the heape, yet indeede it increaſeth the heape, as it is ſaid of tithes and offering, *Bring them in*, and thinke not, that becauſe you leſſen the heape, that you are poorer men, no, ſaith the *Lord*, it will increaſe your ſtore, *I will open the windowes of heaven*, and you ſhall have ſo much the more for it; ſo it is true in this caſe. In other things you ſee it well enough. You know, the baiting of the horſe hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the ſithe, though there be a ſtop in the worke for a time, yet, as our common ſaying is, a whet is no let, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Mal. 3. 10.

Simile.

2 *Anſw.* It is greater than worldly buſineſſe, and therfore ſhould be preferred.

Secondly, put the caſe it were, yet is it not the greater buſineſſe? what is it that you get by all your labours, and travailes? if it be riches, it comes not into any compariſon with grace, and holineſſe, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, ſay it be ſomewhat more noble than that, as learning, and knowledge; yet what

what is that to the renewing of GODS image in us? were it not better to ſpend time to get grace to make vs *rich to God*; to make vs to get ſtrength in the inward man, to paſſe through all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefeſt excellencie of all others: for is not that the beſt excellencie? When *Adam* was in *Paradiſe*, the having of *Gods Image*, you know, it excelled all other excellencies in the world, and ſo it doth ſtill, and the more you pray, the more you get of this *Image*: for a man of much prayer is alwayes a man of much grace, it much increaſeth thoſe ſpirituall gifts, which are better than all the outward things you can get by your imployment and diligence in them: therefore, I ſay, though it doe ſpend you much time, yet know (as *Chriſt* ſaid to *Mary*) he that prayes much, though he bee a great loſer in other things, yet he *chooſeth the better part.*

What is mans beſt excellency

Prayer increaſeth Gods Image.

Laſt of all, conſider this, when thou commeſt to offer ſacrifice to *God*, wouldeſt thou offer that which coſt thee nothing? If thy continuing in prayer, and ſpending much time in it ſhould coſt thee ſome diſadvantage in thy affaires, and ſhould loſe thee that which another gaines, that thou getteſt not ſo much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doeſt not ſo much in thy trade, in thy buſineſſe, thou doeſt not ſet things in order, as thou mightſt haue done; yet know this, that it is great wiſedome to make our ſervice to *God* coſtly to us, you know *Davids* choiſe: *Shal I offer to the Lord that which coſt me nothing?* and therfore

3 *Anſw.* We muſt perform it though with diſadvantage, that our ſacrifice may coſt ſomewhat.

he would needes give the worth to *Araunah* the *Iebusite* for that which he bought; and therefore since it is to a good master, that sees what you doe, that knowes what it costeth, and what losse you are at, and withall, that is willing and able to recompence it, why should you shorten this businesse, and post it over, because of other occasions, and other businesse that you have to doe?

2 *Object.* In respect of unfitnesse.

Oh, but, a man will say further, I am willing to doe it, but I am unfit for it, and it may be the longer I strive, the more unfit I grow.

1 *Answ.* God accepts the will for the deed, when.

To this I answer, first, in generall, if thou doe it as well as thou canst, though thou doe it not so well as thou wouldest, in this case, *God accepts the will for the deede*, when a man puts his strength to it, when there is no indiligence in him, when there is no lazinesse, (for in that case he will not accept the will for the deede, but) when a man doth his vtmost, as those that would have given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deede, in 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. I say, when thou doest what thou canst, when thou spares no labour to get thy heart upon the wing, to raise and quicken it, and to inlarge it in this dutie: there *God* accepts it.

2 Cor. 8:12,13

Answ. 2 The best fitting to it, is to fall vpon performance.

But againe, I adde further, there is an unskilfulnesse in going about this dutie: many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our selves fitter, by spending time in thoughts, and meditations before, which I denie not but they may be profitable, but yet this I will propound to you that

that the best way to fit our selves to this dutie, when we finde an indisposition unto it, is, not to stay till we have prepared our selves by meditation, but to fall presently upon the dutie, (I will give you the reason of it) because, though a preparation is required for the performance of every spirituall dutie, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when we say we must prepare: for, if we speake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the dutie is the best preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if he were to doe any bodily exercise, there must be strength of bodie, he must be fed well, that he may have abilitie; but the use of the very exercise it selfe, the very particular act, that is of the same kind with the exercise, is the best to fit him for it: so in this duty of prayer, it is true, to be *strong in the inward man*, to have much knowledge, to have much grace, makes a man able, and fit for the duty; but if you speake of the immediate preparation for it, I say, the best way to prepare us, is the very duty it selfe; as all actions, of the same kinde, increase the habits, so prayer makes us fit for prayer; and that is a rule, *The way to godlinesse is in the compasse of godlinesse it selfe*; that is, the way to growe in any grace is the exercise of that grace.

Simile.

Exercise of grace increaseth it.

Note.

It is a poynt that *Luther* pressed, and he pressed it out of his owne experience, and this reason he vseth; In this case, saith he, when a man goes about to fit himselfe, by working on his owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

Note this expression of *Luther.*

his unfitnesse by his owne strength, and to contend with Sathan alone; but when a man feeleth an indisposition, and goes to *God* by prayer, and rests on *God* to fit him, hee takes GOD'S strength to oppose the indisposition, and deadnesse of his flesh, and the temptations of Sathan, that hinder him, and resist him. Therefore you shall find this to be the best way to fit your selves for prayer, namely, to performe the duty. If you seeke to expedite, and devolue your selves out of your unfitnesse, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly you involue your selves farther into those labyrinths, and are caught more and more. But this I speake by the way concerning matter of unfitnesse. The maine answer to this objection, is that which I gave you before, that if a man doe what he can, and doe it faithfully, and in sincerity, that indisposition shall not hinder him; but still remember, it must be done, it is not an excuse to vs, at any time, nor ought to be, that we should omit the duty wholly, under pretence of an unfitnesse.

By labouring against indisposition by our owne strength wee are more intangled.

Obiect. Thirdly, a man is ready to say againe, but I find many difficulties, how shal I do to remove them?

Answ. The best way hereunto, is the very naming of the difficulties to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore you must consider this in generall, that, indeede, it is not an easie thing to call vpon GOD constantly: our misprision of the dutie, our reckoning of it, that it is a more facile, and easie thing, than it is, makes vs more to slight it, and causeth us

7 Impediments in prayer, that makes it difficult.

us not to goe about it with that intention, which otherwiſe we would, but conſider a little what it is. The dutie is very ſpirituall, and our hearts are carnall, and it is no eaſie thing to bring ſpirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

1 Impediment. Our hearts are carnall. *Note.*

Beſides, our natures are very backward to come into the *Lords* preſence, partly by reaſon of his great glory, by reaſon of his Majeſty, who *dwels in light unacceſsible*, and our weake eyes are apt to be dazeled with it; and partly out of an unaccuſtomednes, we are not vſed to it, and therefore we are ready to fly from him, as beaſts that are wilde, and are not tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from us, ſo backward is our nature to come into his preſence.

2 Wee are loath to come into Gods preſence, and why. *Simile.*

Againe, the variety of occaſions hinders us, every thing keepes us backe; if a mans heart bee cherefull, it is apt to delight in other things; if a mans heart be ſad, on the other ſide; if it be a ſlight ſadneſſe, men are ready to drive it away with company, and with ſports, and with doing other things; and if the ſadneſſe be great, we are ſwallowed vp with anguiſh of ſpirit, and then any thing is eaſier than to pray, as you may ſee by *Iudas*, it was eaſier for him to diſpatch himſelfe, than to goe and call vpon *God*; ſo it is with men, when they have exceſſive griefe, when their anguiſh of heart is exceeding great: ſo that, whether a man hath a cheerefull diſpoſition, or a ſad, whether the ſadnes be great or ſmal, ſtill you ſhall finde a difficultie. If we be idle, and have

3 Variety of occaſions hinder us. *Note this.*

nothing to doe, our hearts will bee possest with vaine thoughts; and, if wee be full of busines, that distracts us also, and indisposeth us, on the other side: so still there are impediments.

4 Worldly cares.

But there is one great impediment, among the rest, and most common, which is worldly cares, and worldly-mindednesse; worldly cares hinder spirituall prayer, and spirituall conference, and the holy performance, almost, of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficulty in it, looke narrowly, if that be not the cause.

5 Want of faith in Gods power & providence.

Againe, another great cause of this difficultie in prayer, of such backwardnesse to it, of such indisposition to it, is, because wee doe not well consider the nature of *God*, we want faith in his power, and in his providence, we doe not consider, that he hath that disposing hand, which he hath in every thing that belongs to us, in health, in sickenesse, in povertie, in riches, in good successe, and ill successe: for, if we did see the providence of *God*, and acknowledge it more, wee should be ready to call vpon him, but this want of faith in his providence, that the *Lord* is not seene in his greatnesse, and in his mighty power, this causeth men to bee backward to seeke to him, but very forward to seeke to the creatures. When we have any thing to doe, of any consequence, we are ready to post from this man to that man, and from this meanes to that meanes, but very backward, and negligent to go to *God*, in prayer, to have the thing brought to passe, that wee desire, and this ariseth from want of faith,

When we are so backward to pray to God.

and

and from ignorance of *God*, and our not conſideration of him.

Beſides, Sathan hinders vs exceedingly in this dutie; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what conſequence, and therefore he doth as the *Aramites* did, he *fights not againſt ſmall nor great, but againſt the King*, he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greateſt enemy, which he hath, and if he can keep us from prayer, he hath the vpper hand of us, hee hath wreſted the weapon out of our hands, he hath diſarmed us, as it were, and then he may doe what he will with us.

6 Sathan hindreth.

1 King 22.31.

Likewiſe the ſins we commit, eſpecially groſſe ſinnes, they are a great hindrance to this dutie, and keepe from the ſpirituall, and cheerefull performance of it: for ſinne wounds the conſcience, it diſjoyneth, and diſmembers the ſoule, and a diſioynted member, you know, is unfit to doe any buſineſſe; yea when the ſinne is healed, and forgiven, yet there is a ſoreneſſe left in the heart, though ſome aſſurance of pardon ſhould ſollow, upon the commiſſion of a great ſinne, ſo that, that is another impediment. I muſt not ſtand to reckon vp many, we ſhall find enough by continuall experience.

7 The commiſſion of great ſinnes.

Simile.

Onely this uſe we muſt make of it, that, if the impediments be ſo many, and the difficulties that keepe us from a conſtant courſe in prayer, and from the performance of it to purpoſe, ſo great, then we muſt put on a reſolution to breake through all, and lay it, as an inviolable law vpon

Vſe 1. What courſe is to be taken againſt theſe impediments.

our ſelves, that we will not alter. Let us thinke with our ſelves that the thing is difficult, and will coſt all the care, and all the intention that may be; yea, when thou haſt overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou ſhalt meet with new conflicts, new diſtempers, new affections, new ſtrength of luſts, and a new indiſpoſition of minde will be on thee, and therefore he that will be conſtant in this dutie, muſt put on a ſtrong reſolution; as it was the ſaying of a holy man, one of the holieſt men, that theſe latter times had, that he never went to pray to *God* but he found ſo many impediments, that except he bound himſelfe by an unalterable reſolution, that he reſolved not to breake vpon any occaſion, he could never have kept a conſtant courſe in it, or, if he had, he ſhould never have kept himſelfe from a formall, cuſtomary performance of it. But I will adde no more, to preſſe this vpon you, there hath beene enough ſayd, I beſeech you conſider it.

A new indiſpoſition will be on us daily to prayer.

Note this well.

Now that which I promiſed in the morning to doe, which is, that, that doth exceedingly ſtrengthen us to the performance of this dutie of calling vpon *God*, of *praying continually*, (which we are here commanded to doe) is to remoove certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that ſecretly weaken the eſtimation of this truth, and inſenſibly takes us off, when wee marke them not: for, Beloved, when we are ſo negligent in it, ſurely there is ſomething that is the cauſe of it, and if wee coulde finde the cauſe,

Removing the obiections that are againſt prayer, doth ſtrengthen us to the dutie.

cause, and remove it, wee could not spend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but these foure briefly.

4 Obiections against prayer.

First, a man is ready to say, what need I spend so much time, and be so large in the expression of my wants to *God*, when he knowes them? I cannot make them better knowne to him, he knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it?

1 *Object.*

To this I answere (in a word, because it is an objection that hath not much weight in it) that it is true, the *Lord* knowes thy wants, but withall, he will have thee to know them; because, otherwise, thou wilt not seeke to him, thou wilt not set a price vpon the things that he bestowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankfull to him, when he hath granted them; and therefore you shall finde, our Saviour Christ vseth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken us to prayer, saying, *Your heavenly Father knowes what your have neede of*; what then? Shall wee not therefore pray? Yes, saith he, therefore pray yee the more earnestly, and the more importunately to him: for since he knowes your wants, he will be more ready to heare your requests.

Answ. Why God will have us to pray though hee know our wants.

Math. 6.

Obiect. 2.

I, but it will be said againe, that he doth not only know them, but he also meanes, and purposeth to bestow them: for he hath made a promise to us, and his promise is firme, and sure, and *God* is just, and must keepe his promise, and when he hath

hath fully purpoſed it, what needes ſo much praying to bring it to paſſe?

Anſw. 1. Though God purpoſe to give bleſſing, it is vpon condition that we pray.

I anſwere, the promiſes of *God* are to be underſtood with this ſecret condition annexed, I will doe ſuch and ſuch a thing for you, if you pray, though it be not expreſſed: and therfore, we ſee when *God* promiſed things in particular, yet ſtill they prayed, and prayed earneſtly. When he promiſed *Eliah* that it ſhould raine, yet, we ſee, he prayed, and contended much in his prayer; when he made a promiſe to *David*, that he would *make him an houſe*, yet, you know, *David* went to the houſe of the *Lord*, and ſate before him, and made earneſt prayer, as is recorded in the 2. of *Sam.* So *Daniel* had a particular promiſe, and yet he prayed, and prayed long. The example of our Saviour *Chriſt* is without exception, who had all the promiſes ſure to him, yet, you ſee, *he prayed*, yea, *he ſpent whole nights in prayer*, and therfore you muſt underſtand it, that though you have a promiſe made, though the thing be never ſo ſure to you, yet it is to be underſtood with that, if you call vpon *God*.

1 King 18.41, 42.

2 Sam. 7.11, 2 Sam. 7.18.

Dan. 9.

Anſw. 2 He will haueys. doe it to worſhip him.

And why the *Lord* will have you doe it, I ſhewed you many reaſons in the morning, wee will adde this to it. What if the *Lord* will have thee call vpon him, though hee purpoſe to doe the thing, even for this end, that thou maiſt worſhip him? For, what is it to worſhip the *Lord*? you ſhall finde this vſuall in the olde Teſtament, *The people bowed themſelues and worſhipped*, or *they fell vpon their faces and worſhipped*. The meaning

To worſhip God what.

is

is this, to worship *God* is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worthinesse that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe use so much outward demeanour and observance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him aboue another man: outward gesture, that is the outward worshipping of *God*, the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now you shall see, prayer gives an acknowledgement of his attributes most of any thing: for hee that prayes to *God*, he doth, in so doing, acknowledge his omnipresence, and his omniscience; that hee heares that, which the Idols of the *Gentiles* could not do, that he knowes the secrets of mens hearts, that neither men nor Angels can doe.

Prayer acknowledgeth all Gods attributes.

Omniscience.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his Almightie power, that he is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when wee come, and seeke to him.

Power.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his mercie, and his goodnesse; that he is not onely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Mercy.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his truth, that as he hath promised, so, I make account, he will performe it, when I goe, and seeke to him; in a word, all the attributes of *God*, are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe and seeke to him, and pray to him, in so doing, you acknowledge him, yea you acknowledge him to bee a *Lord*, and a father; as, when we see a child run to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him foode,

Truth.

Simile.

foode, and rayment, we ſay, ſurely ſuch a man is his Father; ſo this very praying to *God*, is a worſhipping of him, becauſe it acknowledgeth his attributes, and his relation to us, and ours to him.

3 *Obiect.*

But againe, thirdly, it will bee objected, I but, alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpoſe of Almighty *God*, if hee doe not intend to doe this thing for me, ſhall I hope to alter him?

Anſw. God is not changed by our praiers, but our ſelves.

Simile.

For anſwere to this, I ſay this, in briefe, that when you doe call vpon *God*, he is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you, as wee have ſayd to you heretofore, when a Phyſitian is ſought unto by his patient, the patient deſires him earneſtly to give him ſuch a cordiall, and ſuch reſtorative Phyſicke, that is pleaſing to him; the Phyſitian denyes him long, yet in the end, hee yelds unto it. Why? not becauſe there is any change in the Phyſitian, but becauſe there is a change in the patient, he is now fitted for this, before hee was not: ſo then the Phyſitian yeelds now, whereas before he refuſed, and yet the change is in the patient, and not in the Phyſitian: and therefore, beloved, when you goe about to ſtrive with *God* in prayer, when you contend, and wraſtle with him, (for ſo we ought to doe) when you uſe many reaſons to perſwade him, you alter not him, but your ſelves: for thoſe arguments that you uſe, are not ſo much to perſwade him to helpe you,

you, as to perſwade your hearts to more faith, to more love, to more obedience, to more humilitie, and thankfulneſſe; and that indeede is the reaſon, why prayer prevailes with *God*, not that the very ſending up is that, that prevailes with him, but becauſe a faithfull, and a ſpirituall prayer puts the heart in a better diſpoſition, ſo that a man is now made readie to receive a bleſſing at GODS hands, that before hee was not: So that, when you thinke you draw *God* to you, with your arguments, in truth, you draw your ſelves neerer to him; as when a man in a ſhip pluckes a rocke, it ſeemeth as if he plucked the rocke neerer to the ſhippe, when as the ſhipp is plucked neerer to the rocke: ſo, I ſay, we draw our ſelves neerer to the *Lord*, and when wee draw neerer to the *Lord*, in prayer, and there is a ſpirituall diſpoſition wrought in our hearts, by the exerciſe of this dutie, then indeede the *Lord* drawes neere to vs, to ſend vs helpe, and to grant our requeſts, that we put vp to him; and therefore, that you ſhould marke by the way, that any prayer, as it hath a higher pitch of holineſſe in affection, and as it hath ſtronger arguments in it, ſo it is a better prayer; not becauſe this prayer ſhall prevaile with GOD more, or, that the excellencie of this prayer ſhould move him, but becauſe this pitch of holy affection, and ſtrength of argument workes vpon your hearts: for the ſtrength of arguments moves your underſtanding, and the holineſſe of affection puts your will in a frame

Arguments in prayer are not to perſwade God but our ſelves.

Simile.

what prayers are the beſt.

frame, and ſo diſpoſeth your hearts, and fits you, as the patient, we ſpake of before, is fitted, when the Phyſitian is willing to give the thing hee deſired.

Obiect. 4. Twofold. But the laſt objection, which indeede is more than all the reſt, is this.

1 A man is ready to ſay, wee ſee there are many men that doe not call vpon *God*, and yet enjoy many mercyes: it may be, a man can ſay with himſelfe, when he did not uſe to pray, he had health and ſleepe, and protection.

2 Againe, on the other ſide, he hath prayed for ſuch and ſuch things, and yet they have not been granted. So this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtayned bleſſings, without prayer, and againe he hath prayed, and yet hee hath not obtayned the bleſſings hee ſought for, at the *Lords* hands.

Anſw. For anſwer to the firſt, that men doe obtaine many bleſſings that doe not pray, (as how many young men are there, and old men too, that have health, and wealth, and peace, and liberty, and abundance of all things, and yet, either they ſeeke not to *God*, or, if they doe, yet not in a holy and ſpirituall manner) and therefore this objection had neede to be anſwered; and therefore I anſwer briefly.

I Anſwer to the firſt part of the obiection. *Anſw.* 1. Firſt, though they have theſe bleſſings, yet they have them uncertainely, they have no promiſe of them, they cannot build upon them; whereas they are ſure mercyes to the righteous man, he can build upon theſe bleſſings: for hee hath

hath a father to goe to, whose love he knowes, and hee hath sure promises to build on; the other, though hee hath them, yet he is in a slippery place, when he enjoyes them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemie, and he knowes not how long he shall enjoy them.

Men that have blessings without prayer have them uncertainely.

But I answer againe (which is the chiefe answer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having blessings through the providence of *God*, and between having them from the mercy of *God*, and by vertue of his promise, and out of his love to us in *Christ Iesus*. A naturall man may have many blessings of *God*, (so *God* sayd that he made *Ieroboam* a King, hee gave him a Kingdome; and many such passages we shall finde, when men come unjustly to them, as he did to the Kingdome, yet *God*, sayth he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet he hath them not in mercy: for if thou hast these blessings, health and sleepe, and successe in thy enteprises, from day to day, and yet thy heart tells thee within, that thou hast not sought them at the *Lords* hands, as thou oughtest, I say to such a man, (and marke it) it were better for him that he should want them: for certainely, when he hath them, in this manner, he hath them without a blessing; yea he hath them with a curse, and so had better to be without them; as it had ben better for *Ahab* to have beene without his vineyard, and as it had beene better for *Gehezi*, to have gone without his reward, that he had of *Naaman*

3 *Answ.* Difference betweene having of blessings through the providence of God, and from the love of God.

To have outward things without prayer we were better want them.

man the *Assyrian*, (for you know he had the leprosie with it:) it had beene better for the children of *Israel* to have gone without their quailes; for you know the curse that followed, death went a long with them; so when a man shall have peace and prosperity, and abundance of all things without seeking them at the *Lords* hands, from day to day, I say, he were better to have wanted them; for there goes death together with them. It is sayd plainely, that *ease slayeth the foolish*, (that is to say) this very prosperity, this thriving, (notwithstanding a neglecting of prayer, and of holy duties) I say, it carries death along with it, as the obtaining of the Vineyard, brought death to *Achab*, the getting of the Kingdome was the destruction of *Ieroboam*, and therefore men have little cause to comfort themselves with this, that they enjoy many blessings, and never pray for them.

3 *Answ.* Many things bestowed on wicked men for the Churches good.

But, to answer this poynt more fully, I say many blessings are bestowed vpon men, not for their owne sakes, but for the Churches sake. A man may have strength of body, he may have great gifts of mind, he may have great successe in using those gifts, he may bring great enterprizes to passe, so that you may truely say, the hand of *God* is with him; all this may be done, not for his sake, but for the sake of the Church, and glory of *God* some other way, that he might doe some service; as you see, it is plainely sayd of *Cyrus*, (*Isaiah*, fortie five, verse 4.) saith the *Lord* there, *For Iacob my servants sake, and for Israel*

Isay. 45. 4.

rael mine elects ſake I have called thee by name, and have given thee this great power, and all this great ſucceſſe, although thou thy ſelfe have not knowne mee. (Marke) *Cyrus* was a moſt proſperous man, *Gods* hand was mighty with him, and yet all this was not for his owne ſake, but for the Churches ſake: ſo you may thinke it is, when men proſper, many times, it is not for their owne ſakes, but to fulfill ſome other end of *Gods* providence; and therefore, marke this, *Note this.* and keepe it for a rule; if thou proſper in thy enterprizes, if thou enjoy wealth, and peace, and abundance of all things, and know that thou doeſt not ſeeke to *God*, from day to day, that thou keepeſt not thy heart right and ſtraight, and perfect before him, thou doeſt not call upon him, in an holy, and ſpirituall manner; certainly it is for one of thoſe cauſes, thou haſt it without a bleſſing, and with a curſe, thou haſt it for other ends, and not for good to thy ſelfe; and therefore thou haſt it very uncertainly, it may be tooke from thee, thou knoweſt not how ſoone; yea, and this thou ſhalt be ſure of, that it ſhall be taken from thee then, when, of all other times it will be unfitteſt for thee: as a theefe comes at a time, when men leaſt looke for him, *Simile.* ſo *deſtruction comes ſuddenly* upon theſe men: *God* cuts them, as a man, when hee would have trees to die, hee loppes them in that ſeaſon, that *Simile.* of all others is the unfitteſt, when the ſappe is in the tree, when the lopping will cauſe them to wither; ſo the *Lord* will ſtrike them in ſuch a ſea-

ſon. It is quite contrary with the Saints, he cuts them in due ſeaſon, hee lopps them in due time, that they may grow the better for it, it is good for them.

Anſwer to the 2. part of the 1. obiection.

But now for the other part of the objection it may be, many among you are now ready to ſay, I have prayed for ſuch and ſuch things, and I have beene earneſt, and yet the *Lord* hath denied mee: My *Beloved*, if we can ſatiſfie this objection, wee ſhall then take this impediment away, that wee propound in this objection, that hath theſe two parts. Therefore to this I anſwer:

Anſw. 1. Our prayers ofttimes are amiſſe in one of theſe three reſpects.

First, if thou haſt not beene heard in thy prayer, conſider, if thou haſt not *prayed amiſſe*; it is a common fault among us, when wee have ſpent much time in prayer, and, it may be, wee have ſpent time in faſting, and praying, and the thing is not granted; wee preſently lay it upon the *Lord*, that hee hath not heard, when many times the cauſe is in our not praying as wee ought; it may be thou haſt beene very earneſt, and therefore thou hopeſt thou haſt done very well: I tell thee, thou maiſt be very earneſt, and importunate with the *Lord*, when it may be no more but a naturall deſire, when a man hath neede to be directed in a difficult caſe, that much concernes him; when he hath neede to be extricated, and taken out of ſuch a difficultie, and ſtrait, wherein he is involved, when he hath need of ſucceſſe, in ſuch an enterpriſe, or any thing of that nature; I ſay, a man may be earneſt with the

First, in reſpect of the principle whence they flow, when they are but naturall deſires.

Lord

Lord in ſuch a caſe, and yet his prayer may be amiſſe, it may not be a ſpirituall prayer, it may not be an expreſſion of holy deſires to the *Lord*; for they onely prevaile with him; not that the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde windes to the ſayles, though holineſſe may guide the rudder, and keepe the courſe, and make the ſterage, yet naturall deſires may make us more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I ſay, conſider thy prayer.

Naturall deſires not excluded in true prayer.

Simile.

Conſider againe, when thou haſt ſought ſo earneſtly to *God*, whether it be not to *beſtow it upon thy luſts*, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, *Iam.* 4. 3. when thou haſt a buſineſſe to be performed, it may be, thou art earneſt with *God*, but haſt thou not an eye to thine owne glory, to thine owne praiſe and credit in it? when thou waſt earneſt for health, was it not that thou mighteſt live more deliciouſly? when thou deſireſt wealth, and ſucceſſe in thine enterprizes, that tend to mend thy ſtate, is it not out of ſome ambition? you know, that deſire is condemned, *If any man will be rich*; is it not a deſire of greatneſſe? would you not be ſome body in your place, and ſet up your houſe and family? Such things indeed *God* beſtowes upon men, but to have our deſires pitched upon them, and to pray for them in that ſenſe, is amiſſe; and my rule for it is in the firſt to *Timothy*, the ſixth chapter, the ninth verſe; *If a man will be rich, &c.* that is, when a man deſireth exceſſively, when he deſireth more than *foode*, and rayment

Secondly, in reſpect of the end when they are for the ſatisfaction of our luſts. Iam. 4. 3.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

When the naturall affection degenerates into a luſt.

rayment *convenient for him*: now the naturall affection is degenerate into a luſt: for when any affection exceedes, it ceaſeth to be an affection, and begins to be a luſt: and therefore where it is ſaid, If any man will be rich, &c. it is ſaid after, it is a luſt.

Queſt.

But you will ſay, how ſhall a man know, when he prayeth to beſtow that, which he prayeth for, upon his luſts?

Anſw. How to know when wee pray to beſtow things on our luſts.

I anſwere, if a man conſult with his owne heart, and deale impartially with himſelfe, hee may know what his ends are; but if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bills you bring in. What is the expence of the things *God* hath beſtowed on you, when hee hath put a *price into your hands*, conſider how you beſtow it. If a ſteward have a great ſumme of money, that his maſter hath truſted him with, and his bills bee, that hee hath beſtowed ſo much in riot, ſo much in fine apparrell, &c. but there hath beene but ſo much beſtowed for his maſters advantage, it is an argument he hath ſpent it ill: ſo, when wee ſee, there hath beene ſo much health ſpent, ſo much time, and ſo much ſtrength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly buſineſſe, without reſpect to *God*, not ſerving *God*, and men in our calling, as wee ſhould doe, and that there hath beene little time beſtowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with *God*, in taking paines with them, from day to day; I ſay, if wee looke upon the bill of expence,

Simile.

pence, and consider how we haue bestowed our time, our health, our strength, our wits, from day to day, and our speech, (for that is one price that we haue in our hands, by which wee may doe good; it is as a bucket by which wee may draw from others; and likewise it is a spring, and fountaine, wherewith we may feede others, with the waters of life) consider, how we haue laid out all these things, and by that wee may know, how we are disposed to use the blessings we seeke for at GODS hands, whether wee seeke them to bestow them vpon our lusts, or to spend those gifts to our Masters advantage; and, if we finde we doe it for our owne lusts, in this case, I say to you, goe and amend your prayers, and GOD will amend your speeding. We must doe in this case, as an angler doth, when he hath throwne the bait into the river, if it stay long, and catch nothing, he takes vp the baite, and amends it, and when he sees it is well, hee then continues, and waites; so wee must doe in this case, if thou pray, and pray long, and have not obtained the thing thou prayest for, looke diligently to thy prayers; see whether they be right or no, if they be not, amend thy prayers, and GOD will amend his readinesse to heare thee; if thou finde, they be sincere and hearty, mingled with holy desires, and not with carnall, and corrupt affections, then let the baite lye still, that is, continue to pray, and to waite, and the LORD will come in due time.

Simile.

Simile.

But this is not all, though it bee one thing;

2 In respect of the manner, when they are uttered carelesly.

besides, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed amisse; it is a common fault amongst us, when we succeede not in any thing, wee attribute it to many other things, but not to our remisnesse and carelesnesse in seeking to *God*; if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sicknesse, and weaknesse, and distemper of bodie, hee thinkes that hee hath eaten amisse, and considers not whether he hath prayed amisse; if a man have miscarried in his businesse, he begins to thinke, whether hee have not beene improvident, whether he hath not dealt foolishly, whether hee hath not omitted such and such meanes, as he might have used, he never thinkes whether hee have prayed amisse; and that indeede is the cause of our miscarrying, and not commonly the thing, which wee attribute it unto: for though *God* be not the immediate cause, you know hee is the great cause; *There is no ill, that he hath not done:* and that which mooves him is alway grace, and sinne; that which mooves him to doe us good, is our obedience to him; that which mooves him to the contrary, is neglect on our part.

What moves God to doe us good & evill.

Answ. 2 God grants our prayers oft times, yet:

First, not in that manner, as we desire.

But, to answer further, suppose thy prayers bee right, yet, thou must consider this, that, when thou thinkest thou art not heard, thou art oft times deceived, and therefore, you must rectifie that misconceit. As for example, sometimes, when wee would have the thing in one fashion, *God* bestowes the same thing upon us in another; and therefore, thou maist be deceived in

in that; it may bee, a man prayes earneſtly, that hee may have a ſtrong body, to doe *God* ſervice withall, it may be, that ſickneſſe of body makes him doe him better ſervice, becauſe it keepes him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly minded. You know the caſe of *Paul*, he would faine have had that luſt taken away that is ſpoken of, 2 *Cor.* 12.9. and why? Surely the thing he would have had, was to have his heart in an holy, and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had it not that way, that hee looked for it, yet hee hath it another way, the *Lord* increaſed in him the grace of humility by it, hee ſaw his owne weakneſſe, and the power of Chriſt the more; and when this was diſcovered unto him hee was content. 2 Cor. 12.9.

It is all one, whether a man be preſerved from the blow of an enemie, or have an helmet given him to keepe it off: it may be a man prayes for money, and for eſtate; if *God* provide meate and drinke, and cloathes immediatly, in ſtead of this, is it not all one? It may be another would have a greater degree of conveniencie, for his dwelling houſe, and many other things; if *God* give him a body able to endure that which is more courſe, all is one, as if he were provided for more delicately. It is all one, whether a phyſitian quench the thirſt of his patient by giving him beere, and drinke, that is comfortable unto him, or by giving him barberries, or ſomewhat elſe, that will doe the thing as well. *Simile.* *Simile.*

It is all one, whether the *Lord* keepe an enemie from doing us hurt, or that he gives us a ſtrong helmet, a buckler, to keepe off the injury from wounding of us: I might give you more inſtances, though the *Lord* give thee not the thing in the very manner that thou wouldeſt have it, yet hee will doe it in another manner.

2 Not by thoſe meanes, which we propound.

Secondly, as we are deceived in the manner, ſo we are deceived in the meanes oft times, in ſeeking to *God*. When a man prayes, he pitcheth upon ſuch a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; it may be, the *Lord* will finde out another way, that thou diddeſt never dreame of. *Paul* prayed to have a proſperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Ieruſalem*, and poſted up and downe from one priſon to another, *God* was now ſending him to *Rome*, yet he ſent him, and ſent him very ſafe with a great company attending upon him, he ſent him it may be in a better manner than hee himſelfe would have gone, and yet it was by ſuch a meanes, as he could never dreame of. Alſo you know, *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian*, he had pitched upon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would have ſurely *come forth, and have laid his hands upon him*, but to goe and waſh in *Iordan*, he thought his labour all loſt, and the requeſt which he made to the Prophet, to no purpoſe; for it was a thing that hee never thought of, it was a weake and poore meanes, that hee made no account of, yet that was the meanes

Inſtances.

meanes that *God* intended: ſo I ſay, wee oft deceive our ſelves, wee pitch upon ſuch particular wayes, and when theſe faile us, and when wee have prayed, that theſe meanes might be uſed, and *God* doth not uſe them, wee thinke preſently we are deceived. *Ioſeph* thought verily *Pharaohs ſteward* ſhould have beene the meanes to bring the promiſe to paſſe, and after that, *Pharaohs butler*, hee uſed as a meanes, hee deſired him to remember him, and yet all this was not the meanes, but another, which hee never thought of, which was a dreame of *Pharaohs*: the like was in the caſe of *Mordecai*, deliverance came a ſtrange way, a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. *Abraham* thought verily that *Iſmael* had beene the ſonne of the promiſe, but *God* tells him hee was deceived, *Iſaac* was the ſonne, in whom hee would make good the promiſe. So the *Iſraelites* thought that *Moſes* ſhould have delivered them, that it ſhould have beene preſently true, that the yoake of bondage ſhould have beene preſently taken off from them; but, wee ſee, *God* went another way to worke, hee ſent *Moſes* away, into a farre Country, and the bondage was exceedingly increaſed upon them; ſo that they thought they were further off now than ever they were before, but, in truth, they were nearer: for the increaſe of the bondage, increaſed *Pharaohs* ſinne, and made him ripe for deſtruction. Againe, it increaſed the peoples humility, it made them to pray harder, and to cry more fervently to *God* for deliverance, and ſo it made them more fit for it, and

Note this.

and at the last, *Moses* was more fitted to bee a deliverer, after hee was so long trained up, and was so much humbled; so that when *God* seemes to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is the next way to bring it to passe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with us, we pitch upon a certaine particular meanes, we think such a man must doe it, or such a course must doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing lesse. And the reason often is, because, if we should have deliverance, many times, by such meanes, by such men, and by such wayes, wee would attribute too much to the meanes. Therfore, we see, when *Gideon* had a great army, the *Lord* would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore we see to what a small number he brought it: so, oftimes, men thinke, oh if I had a such a mans helpe, or if I had such a meanes, it would doe the thing, it would bring the enterprise to passe: when we make too much account of it, the *Lord*, it may be, casts away that, which seemed most probable, and (even as hee doth most of his workes, as hee builds his owne Kingdome, by the most foolish, and improbable meanes of all other, so) often hee doth our businesse by such meanes, that wee least dreame of: therefore be not discouraged. Suppose we pray, that such a great Prince should raise the Churches, that such a warre, that such an enterprise, and project may doe it; put the case the *Lord* will not doe it so, are wee then presently undone? and is there no helpe, because such a battaile

We attribute too much to meanes.

battaile is overthrowne, becauſe ſuch a King did not ſucceede, becauſe ſuch a Generall had not ſucceſſe, according to our expectation? It may be, that is not the way, the LORD will helpe the Church after another manner, that we dreame not of; and ſo for a mans ſelfe, hee hath buſineſſe to be done, or hee is in diſtreſſe, and would have deliverance, and hee thinkes, this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earneſt to have it done: now it is good, in this caſe, to leave it to the LORD, to make our requeſts knowne to him; and, when wee have done that, to be no further carefull, but leave it to the LORD, to doe it his owne way: he is skilfull.

Simile.

If you take a skilfull workeman, and ſay no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you, doe mee ſuch a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the ſetting up of a building, it may bee, hee will goe a way to worke, that thou knoweſt not what it meanes, and yet thou wilt truſt him: why then wilt thou not truſt GOD, and ſuffer him to goe his owne way? and when thou art croſſed in that thing, wherein, it may be, of all others, thou wouldeſt not be croſſed, it may be, it is the beſt way of all other, to bring the thing to paſſe, that thou deſireſt.

Thirdly, or not in our time.

Againe, as wee are deceived in the manner, and the meanes, ſo likewiſe wee miſtake the time: it may bee the LORD is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time, that thou wouldeſt

deſt have him. When a man prayes to be delivered from ſuch a trouble, and ſuch a diſtreſſe, and affliction, hee thinkes the time very long, and ſaith, hee is not heard, becauſe hee is not delivered preſently: wee would all have the ſmarting plaiſter preſently tooke off; but the *Lord* is wiſer than wee, (as the phyſitian knowes what belongs to the patient better than himſelfe) though hee doe it not preſently, yet he will doe it. Therefore ſay not, thou art not heard, thou muſt take heede of taking delayes for denialls, - the *Lord* will defere to doe the thing, yet hee will doe it, and doe it in the beſt ſeaſon: for this is a generall rule, *Gods time is the beſt time.* When thou commeſt to pray for a thing, thou wouldeſt have it done preſently, and thou thinkeſt it is the beſt time, all the controverſie betweene *God*, and thee is, which is the fitteſt time to have it done, thou thinkeſt, it may bee preſently; *God*, it may bee, will doe it a yeare hence; ſurely hee is the beſt chooſer, and wee ſhall finde it ſo. And therefore bee content to waite his leiſure; hee hath many ends in deferring it, it may be, to try thy faith, (as hee did the faith of the *Canaanite*,) and therefore hee would not heare; it may bee to increaſe thy holineſſe, to put thy heart into a better temper, and therefore he deferres longer. He meant to doe that for *Iacob*, that hee did, yet he ſuffered *Iacob* to *wraſtle all night*, and yet he would not doe it, till the inſtant of the morning appeared: ſo it was with *Daniel*, the anſwere

Simile.

Wee muſt not take Gods delayes for denialls.

Note.

Why God deferres to anſwer us,

Note.

swere went forth when hee began to pray, yet hee would have him instant, and continue in prayer; so, I say, the *Lord* hath many ends why hee deferres, let us be content to take his owne time.

Last of all, consider this, when thou seekest to the *Lord*, to have any thing done, it is possible, that it may crosse some other passage of his providence; and in this case thou shouldest be content to be denied.

3 *Answ.* Our prayers may crosse some passage of Gods providence.

But, you will say, why may not both be accommodated?

Object.

I answere, so they shall, though thou see not how; it is not with *God*, as it is with man: if a man doe a good turne to one, when two become petitioners, hee must needes doe an ill turne to another, but *God* composeth all for the best. As for example, DAVID desired much to build a Temple, the *Lord* had another end, hee had resolved in his providence, to make SALOMON the builder of it; indeede this was much better for DAVID: for what more had DAVID gotten, if hee had done it? the *Lord* gave him as full a reward, as if hee had done it: for hee tells him, that for that purpose of building him an house, he would build him an house: so DAVID had his end, to the full, though SALOMON built the Temple. So for ISRAEL, the *Lord* kept the CANAANITES among them, but it was for their profit: there are some passages of GODS providence, that if wee knew,

Answ.

Simile.

knew, wee would yeeld to this, that it were better, that it ſhould bee ſo, than otherwiſe; and therefore it is better, in ſome caſe, that we ſhould bee denied.

So much for this time.

FINIS.

THE

THE THIRD SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NOw wee proceede to that which remaines, ſomething more wee might adde, for the anſwering of this, for the time of Gods granting our petitions, and for the meaſure, we touched it the laſt day a little. *See pag. 59*

For the time, wee are deceived; in that wee thinke, when *God* deferres, he denies; for many times *God* deferres for ſpeciall reaſons, and yet he grants the requeſt, in the fitteſt time for us, as the phyſitian knoweth the fitteſt time to give the patient phyſicke of one kinde or another; and in *Simile.* this

this we muſt yeeld to *God*; as hee doth all his workes in the fitteſt time, ſo hee grants our petitions in the fitteſt time; there is an appointed time for any deliverance to be granted, for any bleſſing, for any comfort that wee neede, and have at his hands. Now, if our ſelves were judges, wee would have things done for us in the moſt inconvenient time, wee would have the ſmarting plaiſter pulled off, before the wound be healed, whereas it is beſt for us to have it kept on: *Beloved*, you ſhall finde, that *God* divides betweene *Sathan*, and us, in this caſe, as we ſee *Rev.* 2.10. *Sathan ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, and you ſhall be there for ten dayes:* it was not ſo long as Sathan would have had it, it may be, he would have had it ten and ten too; nor againe, it was not ſo ſhort as they would have had it, but *God* ſets downe the time betweene them both: and therefore we muſt reſt upon him, and thinke that many times there is great reaſon, why we ſhould be deferred, when wee aske things at his hands; and you ſhall finde hee deferres for one of theſe cauſes, for the moſt part.

Simile.

Rev. 2.10.

Note.

Foure reaſons of Gods deferring to grant our requeſts.

I To try our faith.

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith, as, wee ſee, he deferred to grant to the woman of *Canaan*, although he did meane to grant her requeſt, yet hee deferred long, that hee might put her to the tryall; and you ſee, ſhe was no loſer by it, but when ſhe held out in her prayers, ſhe had her requeſt granted to the full.

2 To humble us more.

Sometimes, hee deferres to grant it, that we may be more humbled; as you know, *Paul* prayed earneſtly,

earnestly, but *God* tolde him, that hee would deferre him, because he needed more humility: so he deferred to grant the request, that the men of *Israel* put up to him against *Benjamin*, when the cause was just, and *God* intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twice, though they fasted, and prayed; his end was, as we see in the text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might bee more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

3
To enable us to use his blessings when we have them.

Againe, sometimes *God* deferres, that we might bee more able to use those blessings that hee meanes to bestow upon us: so hee deferred to raise *Ioseph* to preferment: so he deferred to bring *David* to the Kingdome, that those afflictions that they endured might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperity, as he had provided for them afterwards.

4
To make us to prize his blessings.
Simile.

And lastly, he defers, that he might set a higher price upon his blessings, that hee might inhaunce the price of them; as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more: so *God* withholds blessings, that wee might have a greater edge set upon our desires, that wee might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when we have obtained them.

Concerning the measure, if God give us not so much as we aske.

Now, as hee doth thus for the time, and as we are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denialls; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure: many times GOD grants the things that wee would have, but, because wee

have not ſo large a meaſure as we expect; therefore we thinke we have it not at all, and that the *Lord* hath denied us our prayers, when indeede hee hath not: for a leſſer meaſure, many times, may ſerve as well as a greater: as *God* ſaith to *Paul*, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* Though the temptation doe abide upon us, if there be ſufficient grace to keepe us in a continuall conflict, and warre againſt it, if there be ſufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to uphold, and to comfort us in it, it is ſufficient, it may bring us to heaven, we have a deliverance from it, even when we ſeeme not to be delivered; though we have not ſo full a victory, as we would have, yet that grace may be ſufficient.

A leſſe meaſure may ſerve as well as a greater.

You ſhall ſee this almoſt in all the things wee have occaſion to requeſt at *Gods* hands, that a leſſer meaſure may ſerve as well as a greater. Take it firſt in outward things.

Cleared in inſtances.

1. Wealth. Pſal. 37. 16.

A little wealth may ſerve as well as great revenues; as in *Pſal.* 37. 16: *A little that the righteous hath is as much as great revenues to the wicked:* becauſe a little, when *God* ſhall fill it with his bleſſings, it ſhall ſerve the turne as well; but, if a man hath great revenues, and *God* blowes upon them, and leaves an emptineſſe in them; if a man have great revenues, if hee have great outward comforts, yet, if there be an emptineſſe, if there be a vanity in them, if they be as the huske, without the graine, as the ſhell, without the kernell, as they are often; though there be a great bulke, and they ſeeme very fit to comfort us, yet they will

Simile.

will doe us little good; whereas a little, on the other ſide, will doe much good: for in this caſe it is as it was with *Manna, Thoſe that had little, yet they had ſufficient, and thoſe that gathered over, yet they had never a whit the more:* that is, for their uſe and comfort. You know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nouriſhed, and ſtrengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meate, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kinde, may ſerve as well as much.

2 Inſtance in grace.

And ſo likewiſe, a little grace may be ſo uſed, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much, it may preſerve you from ſinning againſt *God*, as well as a great meaſure. For the confirmation of this looke to *Rev.* 3.8. which is a notable place for this purpoſe: it is ſaid there to the Church of *Philadelphia, Thou haſt a little ſtrength*, they had but a little ſtrength, and yet you ſee there what that little ſtrength did: *Thou haſt but a little ſtrength, and yet thou haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name:* There were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his word, and to be kept from running out to the deniall of his name, and other ſinnes: now the little ſtrength they had, was ſufficient for theſe ends. So that we ſee, hee findes no fault with that Church; other Churches, that had more ſtrength, it may be, they fell into greater ſinnes. But this is a rule which is true, you will finde it true in all obſervation through the Scriptures, That, ſometimes, thoſe that have great grace, yet they may fall into great ſinnes, they may be ſubject

Rev. 3, 8.

Thoſe that have more grace may fall, when weake ones ſtand.

to some strong prevailing lust; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, we see, he was subject to great sinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may have but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be so ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from sinne, more than the other. This must be warily understood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes, than the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary course, to resist greater temptations, more than lesse grace; but yet, (I say for our comfort, that) though a man have but a little strength, yet, as it is said there in the same place, *Rev.* 3. in that little strength, *I have set a doore open to thee*, it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, so that no man could shut it.

Note in what sense this is to be taken.

Rev. 3.

3 Instance in gifts.

And as we say of grace, so likewise for gifts, smaller gifts, meaner gifts may serve the turne, many times, as well as greater gifts: for, you know, a little finger, a small hand may serve to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and, it may be, will doe it better; for, in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of functions, and meaner gifts may serve for the discharge of some operations, of some services, for the Church, as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of functions, so there are variety of members, some stronger, some weaker, and the weaker may serve, in some cases, as well as the stronger; a little Barke may doe better in a small river, than a greater shippe; so a man that hath

Simile.

Simile.

hath but meane gifts may ſerve meane capacities, as well as greater, and better: and therefore thinke not that things are denied, when the thing is granted, not in ſuch a meaſure. And laſtly, to be faithfull in a little gift will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater: *Thou haſt beene faithfull in little,* may *make* a man *ruler over much,* and may bring a great increaſe of the *talents* after. Therefore let not a man be diſcouraged, if he have not ſo great a meaſure as others have. So likewiſe if a man deſire patience, and ſtrength to goe through all variety of conditions, through all the troubles hee meetes with: ſometimes the *Lord* layes a great burthen upon a mans ſhoulders, and gives him great ſtrength to beare it; ſometimes againe hee gives but a little ſtrength, but then hee proportions the burthen to it; and is it not all one, whether the burthen be great, and the ſtrength anſwerable, or the burthen be leſſe, and the ſtrength little? Sometimes hee takes away calamity, ſometimes hee layes it upon a man, and gives him as much ſtrength as wil beare it, and that is as good, as if it were removed; elſe, what is the meaning of that, *You ſhall have an hundred fold with perſecution,* but that you ſhall have ſo much joy, and ſtrength in perſecution, that it ſhall be all one as if you wanted it? So we ſee *Heb.*5.7. when *Chriſt* prayed for deliverance, in that great houre of triall, the text ſaith, *Hee was heard in the things hee feared,* and yet, we ſee, the cup did not paſſe from him, becauſe hee was ſtrengthened to beare it,

Faithfulneſſe in little brings as great a reward as in more.

4 Inſtance, in croſſes, and afflictions.

Simile.

Heb.5.7.

Note.

and ſo it is in this caſe. And ſo much ſhall ſerve for a full anſwere to that, that we be not miſtaken in judgeing our prayers not to be heard, when they are heard.

Dangers of omitting, or neglecting prayer.

And now, *Beloved*, what remaines, but that we ſet our ſelves to the duty, to doe that wee are exhorted unto here, namely, to *pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keepe, at leaſt, a conſtant courſe in it; for, if wee doe neglect it, wee doe but robbe *God* of his mercies, we take them without his leave.

1

2 Againe, we are guilty of the ſinne of unthankfulneſſe: for we ought to *give thankes in all things*.

3 Againe, we neglect his worſhip; for you know prayer is a part of his worſhip, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worſhip, and ſervice we owe unto him.

4 Againe, we ſuffer ſin to lye unforgiven, which

5 is very dangerous: we deprive our ſelves of bleſſings, and bring a curſe upon our ſelves, and we

6 ſuffer our hearts to grow hard, and to be diſtempered: for, from our neglect of prayer comes that deadneſſe of ſpirit, that worldly-mindedneſſe, and unaptneſſe to pray, to heare the word, and to keepe the ſabbath; what elſe is the reaſon of it, why thoſe that have beene forward, and zealous profeſſours, in former times, have loſt their light, and are fallen from their place; I ſay, what is the reaſon of it, when they were ſometimes *fervent in ſpirit ſerving the Lord?* That fire was not kept alive with the fuell of prayer; and when

Why men decline in their grace.

when they declined from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you ſhall finde it commonly to ariſe from remiſneſſe in this duty. Therefore wee ſay to ſuch, *Repent, and amend, and doe your firſt workes*; that is, uſe your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace, and ſtrength againe: therefore take heede of being negligent, and remiſſe in this duty. We have great cauſe to be incouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that wee make ſhalbe loſt, but they come up into remembrance: And therefore you muſt conſider with your ſelves, not onely what you doe for the preſent, but what ſtock of prayers you have laid up. You know, a man may have much in bills, and bonds, as well as in preſent money; ſo there is a certaine ſtocke of prayer, a certaine treaſure laid up, that ſhall not be forgotten. The husbandman lookes not onely upon the graine that he hath in his garner, but hee lookes upon that which is ſowne, though it be out of his hand, yea he reckons that the better of the two; ſo thoſe prayers that have beene ſowed, (it may be, many yeares agoe) are ſuch as will bring in a ſure increaſe. Therefore let us be exhorted to be conſtant in this duty, to be frequent therin, to *continue in it, watching thereto with perſeverance.*

Benefit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is loſt.

Simile.

Simile.

And now wee have diſpatched this, wee will come to anſwere ſome caſes of conſcience that fall out in the performance of this duty, which are divers.

9 Caſes of conſcience concerning prayer.

Firſt, this is one; What ſhall a man judge of his

Caſe 1.

About wandring thoughts in prayer.

his prayers, when they are accompanied with wandring thoughts, whether those prayers are such as *God* wholly refuseth, or what he is to doe in such a case, when hee is subject to wandring thoughts, to vanity of minde, and distemper in the performance of that duty?

Answ.

To this I answere, that wee must distinguish of the cause whence these wandring thoughts arise.

I The cause of them is weakenesse.

Sometimes they arise, not so much from our owne neglect, as from weakenesse, from temptation; and in such a case *God* layes them not so much to our charge. As, for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke, yet, if he hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the palsey in it, or if one jogg him while he is about it, the fault was not so much in him, it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weakenesse, or it is an impediment cast in by another: so it is in this case, this wandring of minde proceedes from a naturall infirmity, and imbecillity, that hangs upon the nature of man, which is not so able to keepe it selfe close to such a spirituall businesse: and this *God* considers, for he is wise, and *knowes that we are but flesh*: When a weake servant goes about a businesse, though hee doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weake: the *Lord* considers the naturall weakenesse that we are subject unto, and hee deales mercifully with us, in such a case: for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in his hand,

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

hand, but hee hath a palsey arme, and therefore he cannot keepe it steddy, though he have a mind to doe it.

But the other case is, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Sathan interrupts him, when hee is diligent to hinder him in such a duty, in this case, *God* chargeth it not upon him, and doth not cast us off, nor reject our prayers, because of that: but, on the other side, when this wandring of minde shall rise from meere negligence, on our part, from profanesse, from want of reverence, because we doe not intend holy duties as wee ought, wee come not to them with that conscionableness, with that carefulnesse as we should doe; in this case now, it is a great sinne, this moves the *Lord* to anger, when we performe the duty in that manner, when we doe not so much as set our selves about it with our strength, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance. 2. Temptation. 3. Negligence.

Or secondly, when we our selves be the cause of it, by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffering our selves to be worldly minded, by suffering an indisposition to grow upon us, and not labouring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good that is played upon it, yet it is unpleasant, because the instrument is out of tune; and whose fault is that? So, when thou commest to *God*, and sufferest thy heart to be distempered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sinne, as well as thy profanesse, and 4. Voluntary admitting of vaine thoughts *Simile.*

and neglect in the very time of the performance: And, by this you may learne, how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty, and likewiſe you may ſee how to prevent them. The way to prevent them, is to keepe our hearts in tune before, to have them ready, as *the wiſe man hath his heart at his right hand*; that is, he hath it ready when he hath it to uſe. When a man is to uſe his horſe, he doth not ſuffer him to runne up and downe in the paſtures wildely, but will have him under bridle; ſo we ſhould keepe our hearts in frame, that they may be ready to doe us ſervice in ſuch an holy duty, when wee have neede of them.

How to prevent wandring thoughts in prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, we muſt be diligent, when we come to performe the duty, that, though our mindes doe wander, yet we may be ready to recall them preſently, to ſet our ſelves to it with all diligence. So much for anſwering of this firſt caſe.

Caſe 2. About Indiſpoſedneſs, & dulneſſe, & unaptneſſe to prayer.

The ſecond Caſe is, what a man is to doe, when hee findes a great indiſpoſition to prayer, ſuch a dulneſſe, and deadneſſe in him, that hee knowes not how to goe about the duty, and he thinkes, if he doe it, it were as good be undone.

Anſw. 1.

To this I anſwer briefly, that in all ſuch caſes, a man is bound notwithſtanding to performe it, let his heart be never ſo much out of temper, let there be never ſo great a dulneſſe, and deadneſſe of ſpirit upon him, yet he is bound to doe it.

Object.

But you will ſay, Why, but I am altogether unfit.

Anſw.

I anſwer, That a man by ſetting himſelfe upon the

the worke, ſhall gather a fitneſſe, though he were unfit at the firſt. You know, members, that are benummed, yet by uſing them, they get life, and heate, and come, in the end, to be nimble enough; ſo it is with the heart, in this caſe, when it is benummed, the very uſing of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood, though it bee greene, yet, if it be long blowed, at the length it will be dry, and take fire; ſo it is with the heart, a man may bee long about getting it on the wing, yet, with much adoe he may doe it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty in ſuch a caſe; yea ſo much the rather, becauſe there is never more needs of calling upon *God*, than at ſuch a time: for then a man lyes moſt expoſed to temptation, then, if any ſinne come, he is ready to be overtaken with it, hee is unfit for any thing: and therefore, if ever he have needs to call upon *God*, it is at that time.

Simile.

Simile.

Never more need to pray, than when we are moſt indiſpoſed.

Note.

But you will ſay, It may be, *God* will not accept it.

Obiect.

I anſwer briefly, Although a mans heart be ſo indiſpoſed, that when hee hath done all hee can, yet hee can get no life, hee can get no heate in the performance of ſuch a duty, yet *God* may accept that prayer, as well as that which is moſt fervent. And that you may underſtand this aright, you muſt take it with this diſtinction:

2. *Anſw.*

This dulneſſe, and deadneſſe in prayer, it comes from one of theſe two cauſes:

Cauſes of dulneſſe.

One is, when *God* withdrawes his owne ſpirit, that is, withdrawes not his ſpirit altogether;

1. Deſertion.

(for

(for there may be a helpe, when wee perceive it not) but when he withdrawes the livelineſſe, and quickneſſe of his ſpirit; and in this caſe, if we doe our duty, if wee doe the beſt wee can, the *Lord* doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchſafed ſuch enlargement of our hearts, though he hath not powred out his ſpirit upon us, in the performance of the dutie, as at other times, but he gives a ſecret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor perhaps is ſo great as at other times; yet I ſay, when it ariſeth from his owne withdrawing of that fitneſſe, and we are not negligent, which is the other cauſe, I ſay, when we are not negligent, but we doe our beſt, in this caſe, *God accepts the will for the deed*, as we have often ſaid to you: that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is ſuch as wee cannot remove, when the dulneſſe of ſpirit is ſuch as it is not in our power to remove, when we have uſed our utmoſt diligence, in that caſe it is no hindrance. And therefore it is a great comfort unto us, that we have uſed our diligence in this duty, when we have uſed our beſt to quicken our hearts, though it be not done, yet *God* accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

2 From negligence.

When indiſpoſition is no hinderance.

Caſe. 3. About praying after a man hath committed ſome groſſe ſinne.

The next caſe is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed ſome great ſinne, after hee hath wounded his conſcience, whether then, notwithſtanding hee muſt come, and keepe his conſtant courſe in praying, morning and evening; whether he ſhall be ſo bolde, as to come into *Gods* preſence after he hath ſo exceedingly offended him.

To

To this I answer, that a man is bound, (notwithstanding any sinne that hee hath committed, be it what it will be) to keepe his course constantly in prayer, and not to omit it, not to keepe off, not to deferre it. And my ground for it is, because this is a duty, it is a charge, that *God* hath laid upon all, to *pray continually*; that is, at the least twice a day, as we shewed before, to keepe a constant course in it. Now, it is certaine, our failing in one thing, must not excuse us in another: when the dutie lyes on us, we have no dispensation to be negligent in it; and therefore we are bound to doe it.

Answ. In this case prayer is not to be neglected.

1 *Reas.* It is Gods command.

Note.

Againe, consider this, that a particular offence doth not offend so much, as if we grow strangers to *God*, as if wee grow to a generall rebellion against him. As, put the case, a childe commits a great offence against his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers house, and grow a stranger to him, that is more than the particular offence: for a generall rebellion must needs be more than the particular. And to give over calling upon *God*, to breake off that course, to grow a stranger to him, to runne away from his house, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, & a constant course of obedience to him, this is a generall rebellion, & is worse than the particular; yea such carriage, after sin committed, moves *God* to anger more than the sinne it selfe: as many times, the contemptuous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moves a master, a husband, or a parent more, than the particular failing though it were exceeding great. Be-

2 *Reas.* Neglect in this is worse than the sinne wee committed before.

3 *Reas.* It leaves the breach in the conscience open.

Besides, consider, when a man commits a great sinne, he makes a great gappe in his conscience, he makes a great breach there; and will you have that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that are in the heart to steale out? I will give you but one instance for this: You see, S. *Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because hee came in presently, and repented, and sought pardon, (as you know hee did) you see, hee was preserved from running into further arrerages: for hee made up the gappe, hee made up the breach.

If we recover not quickly out of a sin, we adde more to it.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come unto *God*, as hee should have done, to keepe his ordinary course in sacrificing unto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes hee fell into. And likewise, that was the case of *Salomon*, you know, to what a height hee grew, by not comming to *God*, at his first failing: And therefore, I say, there is reason, that wee should doe it, though the sinne be great, wee ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

Quest. But may I not stay till I be more fitted, till my heart bee more softened, and more humbled?

Answ. Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for the

the heart commonly growes more hard in continuance; the conscience is more tender, immediatly after the sinne is committed, than it is afterwards; and when thou stayest for more humility, thou findest lesse: And therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly hold, it is then best to quench it, before the wound be festered, before it hath continued long; for the heart will grow worse and worse, as it is *Heb.*3.12. *Take heede that you be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne*: The meaning is this, when you commit a sinne, you thinke, if you stay a weeke, or a fortnight, or amoneth, you shall come in as well as at the first; no, saith the Apostle, *While it is to day*, come in, that is, doe it presently, for sinne will deceive you, it will harden your heart before you bee aware, it will make a distance betweene *God* and you, it will take you off from him, it will leade you further on: and therefore take heede, that your hearts bee not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne, that sinne doe not deceive you, and it will doe it before you thinke of it. And therefore in this case you should doe as you doe with waters; when waters breake out a little, it is best to stop them presently; if you suffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length, you be unable to stop them: so in this case, when you have cõmitted a great sinne, come in speedily.

Staying for fitnes after sin committed, we become more unfit,

Heb.3.12.

Simile.

But you will say, What, shall a man come into *Gods* presence, who is most holy, after he hath defiled

Object.

filed himselfe with some great sinne, is not this an unreverent thing?

Answ. We must come to God with a disposition turned from sin.

I answer briefly, it is very true, if thou be bold to come into *Gods* presence with the same disposition wherewith the sinne was committed, with a minde so fashioned, and so framed, in that case thou doest exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of profanesse: and therefore, when wee say, thou must come in, and keepe a constant course in prayer notwithstanding, the meaning is, you must come in with a disposition turned aside from your sins, and brought home to *God*, with a minde to abhorre that which is evill, and to cleave to that which is good; there must bee this conversion of the minde to him, thou must not come in with the same disposition, that must be altered. So much shall serve for the answer to this case.

Case.4. About a set forme of praier

Another case is, whether wee may use a set forme of prayer? and likewise whether it bee sufficient?

Answ.

I neede not say much to you, for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a set forme of prayer may be used: you know, Christ prescribed a forme, you know, there were certaine *Psalmes* that were prayers, that were used constantly; and therefore there is no doubt but that a set forme may be used, we have that example for it: And in the Church, at all times, in the primitive times of the Church, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to *Luther*, and *Calvins* time, still, in all times, the Church had

had set formes they used, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this:

That in stinted prayer the spirit is straitned, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall have his spirit, as it were, bounded, and limited, that hee cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed; and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should be left to more libertie, (as hee is in conceived prayers,) and not tyed to a strict forme. *Object.*

To this I answer, even those men that are against this, and that use this reason, they doe the same thing daily in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him that heares it; I say, it is a forme to him. For put that case, that he that is a hearer, that heares another pray, suppose that his spirit bee more inlarged, it is a straitning to him, hee hath no liberty to goe out, he is bound to keepe his minde intent upon it: And therefore, if that were a sufficient reason, that a man might not use a set form, because the spirit is straitned, a man should not heare another pray (though it be a conceived prayer) because, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may be, the hearer hath a larger heart, a great deale, than hee that speakes and prayes: so that there is a bounding, and straitning, and a limiting of the spirit. And therefore that reason cannot be good. *Answ.* 1. They that object against a set forme of prayer, doe the same thing. *Note.*

Againe, I answer, though the spirit be limited, at that time, yet hee hath a libertie, at other times, *Answ.* 2. We have liberty at other times.

times, to pray as freely as he will in private; and therefore he is not so tyed, but, though, at that time he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediatly after, he may be as free as he will in secret.

3 *Answ.* The spirit is not restrained in a set forme of prayer.

Againe, I answer, it is not a tye, and a restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largenesse of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though he be tyed in words, yet there is not a tye upon the affection, that may be extended more, in putting up the same petition, when another mans is more straitned: therefore there is no tye, and limit upon that. And this is enough to satisfie that, that a set forme of prayer must be used.

Quest.

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient? whether a man may thinke, if he have beene present at publique prayer, (which is a commendable thing to use constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient.

Answ. Though a set forme may be used in prayer, yet that alone is not sufficient.

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what wee ought to doe in this case, for we may be deceived in it; and I answer plainly, It is not sufficient: A man that is diligent in publique prayers, that keepes them morning and evening, if hee thinkes now hee hath discharged his duty, hee is in a very great errour: and this is the reason, because they are not sufficient. Indeed, they are to be used, for *God* is worshipped in them, and it is a more publicke worship: and when

when *God* is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many ſpectators, more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour, ſo it is when men joyne in this worſhip. And many other reaſons there be, but that is not the thing, I am now upon, to commend it to you; but, I ſay, it is not ſufficient, although it ought to be done, becauſe there are many particular ſinnes, which cannot be confeſſed in publique prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publique prayer you cannot unfold, and open, and expreſſe unto the *Lord*.

Simile.

5 Reaſons proving that a ſet forme of prayer is not ſufficient.

1 *Reaſ.*

Againe, the end of a ſet forme of prayer is to be a helpe for the private, (for the publique it is another caſe) a helpe that one may uſe that is yet exceeding weake: a childe, that cannot goe, may have ſuch a proppe, but wee muſt not alway be children, we muſt not alway uſe that helpe.

2 *Reaſ.*

Simile.

Beſides, we muſt conſider this, that there is no man, that hath any worke of grace in his heart, but he is enabled in ſome meaſure to pray, without a ſet forme of prayer, hee is able to expreſſe his deſires to *God* in private, one way or another: There was never any man in any extreame want, but he knew how to expreſſe himſelfe, where he had libertie to ſpeake: ſo it is in this caſe.

3 *Reaſ.*

Beſides, the ſpirit of a man hath greater liberty in private; there a man may *powre forth his ſoule to the Lord*, as *Hanna* ſaith, 1 *Sam.* 1. which in publicke hee cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which hee hath cauſe to bee thankfull to *God* for.

4 *Reaſ.*

1 Sam. 1.

5 Reas.

Besides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which, in the publike common petitions, hee is not able to doe: for, *Beloved,* know this, that the prayer, that is required from day to day, is not so much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keepe the heart in order; for, if sinfull lust grow upon it, and distempers, and worldly mindednesse, the end of this duty is to worke them out againe, to renew repentance againe; and, when there is a forgetfulnesse of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good desires begin to languish, to renew, and recover them, to put fuell to them: and this is not done by the performance of the publike onely. And therefore, I say, though you performe it in your families, and meete in the congregation, you must not thinke that this is enough, you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

The end why prayer is used.

Case. 5. About using the voice, and about the gesture in secret prayer.

Againe, this is another Case, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether he be bound alwayes to use his voice? whether hee be bound alwayes to use such a kinde of gesture?

Answ.

I answer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in these things, and therefore I passe them over) for the gesture in publike, there is more heede to be taken of that, because it is a publike and open worship of *God*; and therefore in publike the gesture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the olde testament

ſtament eſpecially) that they *bowed downe, and worſhipped* ſtill, *Chriſt* looked up to heaven, *Paul kneeled downe*, and the reſt with him, and prayed, and many ſuch like expreſſions you have mentioned in the Scriptures: where you have prayer mentioned in publicke, ſtill you ſhall finde an expreſſion of ſome reverent geſture, and when we appeare before the *Lord* in the publicke performance of this duty, eſpeciall care muſt be taken hereunto. In the private, the caſe is different, there variety of geſtures may be uſed; I doe not ſee but all variety of geſtures may be uſed; there are many examples for walking, and lying, and ſitting: onely this is to be taken heede to, that, even in private, as farre as may be, the geſture be ſuch, as may both expreſſe the inward reverence in the heart, and of the outward man; but there is a libertie in that: I thinke this is the beſt rule in private, that that geſture be uſed, that doth moſt quicken, & doth helpe the duty moſt. Some geſture may bring a dulneſſe, and indiſpoſition, when another may quicken the body, and make it more fit for prayer: ſometimes lying is inconvenient, and ſometimes more convenient: And therefore, in this caſe, the beſt rule is, to uſe that geſture, which quickens moſt, which helpes moſt the duty. Some geſtures may breede a wearineſſe in the body, ſome may breede a dulneſſe; ſome are painfull to the body: all this is a hinderance to the duty, when the change of it may quicken and helpe.

Note.

That geſture is to bee uſed in private prayer that doth moſt quicken.

Now for the voice, I ſay, for that, (as for the

gesture) it is not simply required: for *God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit.* Men, that have eares, and bodies, they must have men speak to them: but *God*, that is a spirit, delights in that which is like himselfe; and therefore all his eye is upon the inward behaviour of the spirit. Besides, the spirit may speake to *God*, when the voice doth not; as you know, the *Angels* speake to *God*, and they speake one to another. The Schoolemē have great disputes about the speech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* speakes to another after this manner; When any one hath a conceit in his mind, of any thing, with a will that another should understand it, and that *God* should understand it, that is enough for the expression of it; so is it with the spirit of a man, when he hath such a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a desire in his will, that *God* should understand that petition; that is an offering it up to the *Lord*, it is as true a speaking to the *Lord*, as when you deliver it by an outward voice, for the spirit agrees with the *Angels*, as it is a spirit, and as they speake one to another: and to the *Lord*, so doth the spirit of man; though indeede the tongue be to be used, as it is, *Iam.* 3.9., *Therewith blesse wee God*, and therewith should we pray among others, and before others, and speake before others: but when there is any cause to use the voice in private, it is this, as farre as it may quicken the heart, (as I said of gesture) and as farre as thereby wee may keepe our thoughts from wandring. If the voice were

Ioh. 4.24.

Angels how they speake to God, and one another.

Iam. 3.9.

Why the voice is used in prayer.

were not used, perhaps, the thoughts would be subject to more wandring, and we should not be ready to take notice of them, but they would slip before wee are aware: and therefore, when the voice is used, it must bee to keepe in the thoughts. In some cases, to omit the voice, is more convenient, when it may draw any other inconvenience; but that is left to every mans particular case, as he shall finde the use of it to hinder him, or further him. And so much shall serve for this Case.

FINIS.

THE FOVRTH SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

Case 6. About want of leisure to pray, by reason of present businesses to be speedily dispatched.

ANother Case of Conscience (in the businesse of prayer, is) what a man is to doe, when hee is in strait of time, by reason of some waighty businesse, that requires a quicke and sudden dispatch, and gives him not the leisure and liberty, that otherwise he might have had?

To this I answer, you shall finde, that in Scriptures, the prayers of Saints have beene sometimes larger, and sometimes shorter. Our Saviour *Christ*, you know, sometimes spent a whole night

night in prayer; Surely he did not take ſo much time alwayes, and, no doubt, wee have libertie ſometimes to be larger, ſometimes ſhorter, according as our occaſions will permit. But yet this you muſt remember, that though the buſineſſe be great, yet that buſineſſe, that concernes the ſalvation of our ſoules, and the worſhip of *God*, is greater: And therefore, except it bee a true ſtrait, this is ſtill to be preferred; for it is a buſineſſe of greater moment: and therefore you muſt give a juſt weight to your buſineſſe, and not ſuffer every ſmall buſineſſe that comes in to thruſt out this dutie: for here you keepe not the due proportion, but neglect the greater, and take the leſſe.

Matters concerning ſalvation to be preferred before outward buſineſſe.

Beſides, doe you not ſay, when you have great buſineſſe in hand, that a man muſt have a dining time, and a ſleeping time, &c. Why may wee not ſay as well, A man muſt have a praying time; is it not neceſſary? You know what *Iob* ſaith, you know the courſe that hee kept in reading the word, (for that is cleerely meant in that place,) *It was more precious to him than his appointed foode:* that is, he had rather omit his uſuall meales, (for that hee meanes by his appointed foode) than to omit a conſtant courſe in performing thoſe holy duties. Therefore, I ſay, it ought carefully to be tooke heede of, that wee omit it not, except it be a very great ſtrait; if it be, wee may be ſhort in it, *God* tyes us not ſo exactly you ſee therein, rules are not ſet downe in the Scriptures, wherein we are tyed preciſely to ſuch an houre, to ſuch

Wee ſhould allot time for prayer, as well as for other buſineſſe.

a time, but *God*, in mercie, and in wiſedome, hath left it to your libertie: onely, you ſee, this is the command, *Pray continually*, doe it exceeding much, at the leaſt, keepe a conſtant courſe in it, as wee heard before, but you may be ſhorter in it.

Cautions about ſhortnes of prayer in ſuch ſtraits.

Now let theſe five Cautions be obſerved.

1 *Caution.* Husband time well two wayes.

First, take heede that this ſtraitning come not from your ill husbandry, that is, from your ill husbanding of time; for, if a man were carefull to redeeme time before, it may be, he needs not be put to ſuch a ſtrait, as hee is at that time, when he is to performe this duty. Suppoſe you have a journey to goe, that requires ſo much time, and you muſt be gone earely; you may ſo husband the time before, that you may get time for your journey. And for the performance of this duty, and ſo for other buſineſſe, as I ſaid in the morning, when you ſhould ſequeſter your ſelves to performe this duty of prayer, take heed that you be good ſtewards of your time, that you husband it well.

2

And likewiſe, this is another part of husbanding your time, that you let not that, which is very precious, goe for things of ſmall moment, for that is ill husbandry. You ſhould redeeme the time, and buy it with the loſſe of ſomething. You have time to beſtow in the waighty buſineſſe of your calling, in things that belong to the good of man, much more ſhould you in this that belongs to the worſhip of *God*: And therefore, if it may be, redeeme it with ſome loſſe; ſo you

you ought to husband it, otherwise you redeeme not time as you ought. This is the first Caution that ought to be observed, to husband and redeeme the time well.

The second is, if we be straitned at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feigned excuse and pretence, if you be straitned, when you have libertie, you will be carefull to spend more time in it; by that you shall know your sincerity in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuse, and a putting off.

2. *Caution.* Recompence it another time.

Moreover, another Caution to be observed is, that you take not too much businesse upon you: if you be straitned with businesse, and therefore cannot be so large in the performance of this duty, as otherwise you would, if you did not take so much upon you, your selves are the cause of it. And therfore, he that takes lesse, he that spends more time in the things that belong to salvation, he hath made the better choise; as *Mary* made a better choise than *Martha*, though her imployment were good.

3 *Caution.* Take heede of too much businesse.

Likewise, as you must not pester your selves with too much businesse, so likewise you must take care, that your mindes be not too much intent upon them; for too much intention of minde upon businesse, causeth distraction in prayer, and causeth us to post over the dutie, as well as too much businesse: when a mans minde shootes it selfe too farre in businesse, when it is too much occupied about it, when it is too much intent, when the soule cleaves too fast upon the busines, and

3 *Caution.* Be not too intent upon businesse.

and cannot looſe it ſelfe to the performance of ſpirituall duties, which require freedome.

5 *Caution.* Looke to the ground of the ſtrait.

The laſt Caution is, that the ſtrait riſe not from diffidence in *God*, and confidence in the uſe of the meanes; for, it falls out oft times when wee have buſineſſe of moment in hand, there is a turning, and poſting from one creature to another, from the uſe of one meanes to another, that wee cannot get time in prayer, not ſo much for want of time ſimply, but becauſe wee minde the meanes too much, we intend them too much, wee doe not truſt *God* enough with the buſineſſe; if we did, we might ſpend leſſe time in them, and more in ſeeking to him. So much for that Caſe.

Caſe 7. About uſe of the meanes.

Another Caſe of Conſcience in this buſineſſe of calling upon *God* is, What a man is to doe for the uſe of the meanes, for when wee are bid to pray, and ſeeke to *God*, that is the ordinary queſtion; But may wee not uſe the meanes too?

Anſw. Reaſons why meanes muſt be uſed.

To this I anſwere, That prayer is ſo farre from excluding the meanes, that it includes them; for, if the deſire be fervent, when we deſire any thing at *Gods* hands, it will make us diligent in the uſe of the meanes, to uſe a convenient diligence, as it will make you earneſt in ſeeking to *God*, and in putting up your requeſts to him. For, if a man ſhall pray, and bee negligent in the uſe of the meanes, I will be bolde to ſay it, it is but like the deſire of the ſluggard, that is a languiſhing, fainting deſire: Hee deſires, but his

1 *Reaſ.* Elſe our deſires are not good.

his ſoule hath nothing; hee deſires, but he puts his hand into his boſome: the deſires which you expreſſe, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earneſt, if you bee remiſſe in the uſe of the meanes. Hee that deſires grace, deſires ſtrength againſt ſinfull luſts and temptation, and yet is remiſſe in the uſe of the meanes, by which grace ſhould be increaſed, and ſtrength gained, to reſiſt thoſe corruptions, and temptations; certainely his deſires are but vaine deſires.

2 *Reaſ.* Elſe it is a ſign we truſt not God.

Beſides, it is an argument that wee truſt not in *God*, that wee make not accompt of our prayers, except wee bee diligent in the uſe of the meanes; therefore wee are farre from excluding them: for, if you ſeeke to *God*, and truſt to your prayers, and thinke that they will prevaile with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to uſe ſuch meanes, as *God* hath ordained to bring the thing to paſſe. Even as, if a man ſeeke to a Phyſitian, to ſuch a Phyſitian, that hee truſts to, into whoſe hands hee would put his life; when this Phyſitian preſcribes ſuch a courſe, ſuch a dyet, and ſuch a thing to bee taken at ſuch a time, the more hee reſts upon the Phyſitian, the more carefull hee will bee to obſerve his preſcription, and rules: And ſo, in this caſe, the more you reſt on *God*, the more carfull you will bee to uſe ſuch meanes as hee hath appointed, when hee hath ſaid, theſe, and theſe meanes are to bee uſed. In this caſe, I ſay, it is a ſigne your prayers are more

Simile.

to

to purpose, when you are diligent in the use of them, when you dare not sleight nor neglect them.

3 *Reas.* It is that wee pray for.

Againe, you must consider this, that, when we pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to have any thing done without meanes, but wee pray to have a blessing upon the meanes; and, if we pray for a blessing upon the meanes, our minde is not that they should be omitted: for, you see, *God* doth all things by second causes, he saves us not without our selves, that is, he useth us as instruments, he doth every thing by men, and by creatures, and by meanes; and the end of our prayers is, not to have them done without meanes, but to have a blessing upon them. But that which is chiefly to bee observed to cleare this point to you is this; That prayer is not the onely meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any thing to passe.

4 *Reas.* Prayer not the onely meanes.

There are two things to effect a businesse, that is, prayer and meanes both: we doe not say prayer is the onely meanes, indeede, then the other were excluded; but since it is but a part, and the other makes up the totall meanes of bringing any thing to passe, it doth not exclude them, but they may be both joyned together, prayer, and the use of the meanes. This is enough to shew that we may use meanes, we may pray, and lay our hand on the plowe, wee may seeke to *God*, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body else. But now these three Cautions are to be observed.

Cautions about the use of the meanes.

The

The first is, That, if wee doe use meanes, wee use those that are right; for, if you trust *God*, and depend upon him, you will not steppe out to any inordinate meanes, nor use lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: If you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, you doe not rest on *God*; for, if you did, you would not use other meanes, than hee hath appointed.

1 *Caution.* Wee must vse right meanes.

Secondly, Though you use the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so use the meanes, that your confidence be not in your prayers: for it is one thing to use the meanes, & it is another thing to have confidence in them. And therefore wee say to you in this case, that you must doe as hee that useth the light of the Sunne; he so useth the light, that he hath an eye upon the Sunne, from whom that light comes; for, he knowes, that if the Sunne were set, the light would be gone. Or as he that takes water in a Cesterne, or River, he so takes it, as that hee hath an eye to the fountaine, hee knowes if the fountaine were stopped, the River would be quickly dried up: So you should thinke with your selves, if I use any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must be upon *God*: for all the helpe that we have from the creature, it is but as a beame to the helpe that comes from *God* himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Physitians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one principall

2. *Caution.* Not trust the meanes.

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

pall ingredient, amongst the rest, that he makes account will cure the disease: So doe, in this case, make use, both of the prayer, and of the meanes, yet you must know, that prayer is the principall effecter of the thing, and the principall meanes, it is that, wherein your confidence is to be: for, indeede, it is *God* that doth bring every thing to passe: There is no good in the Citty, nor no evill, but he doth it; you know he takes all to himselfe. All the meanes, by which good, and ill is conveyed to you, they doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the instruments; as the beere, and the wine, wherein the physicke is taken, but it is the physicke, the medicine that cures: So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe, and the power of *God*, the efficacie, that comes from him, that brings things to passe; therefore, that must be remembred, use the meanes, that you use, with dependance upon *God*, with an eye upon him, that your hearts rest not upon them; for, if they doe, it is an inordinate use of them.

Simile.

3 *Caution.* Not to sticke to particular meanes.

Lastly, you must take heede of sticking in any particular meanes; for, if you doe, it is a signe that you trust not *God* as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch upon such a particular way, and we thinke that must doe it, or nothing. Now if *God* be trusted to, he hath more waies to the wood than one, he hath more means to bring a thing to passe than one: And therefore we must leave it to him, who often doth it best by

by another meanes than we dreamed of. As for example, *David* had a promise of the Kingdome; Now, when he had the Kingdome of *Iudah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Israel* stood out: for *Ishbosheth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: besides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Iudah*, wee see how *God* wrought the busines, without his device, by a meanes, that hee never thought of, in that battaile, when *Saul* was killed, and so many of his sonnes, there was so much way made for him, when himselfe used no meanes to bring it to passe. Afterward when the Kingdome of *Israel* was kept from him, and he had onely *Iudah*, we see, *God* caused a division between *Ishbosheth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captain, upon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemie; and what *Abner* might have done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, (though *Ioab* sinned in it,) caused *Abner* to be taken away by *Ioab*: when this was done, yet *Ishbosheth* was alive still; then were there two men set by the providence of *God*, (though it were a great sinne in them) to take away his head; and so the Kingdome came wholly to *David*: for, there were but two sonnes, *Mephibosheth*, that was lame of his feet, and *Ishbosheth*, that was lame in his minde, a weake man, unable to mannage so great and weighty a businesse to purpose: So *God* brought the businesse to passe by a way that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may use meanes, yet, after the use of them, wee

must depend upon *God*, and leave it to *God*, to take one meanes, or other. We must doe in this case, as we doe when we goe to a man, that is very skilfull to doe a worke for us: If wee goe to a Carpenter, and tell him we have such a thing to be done; or, if we goe to those that we call *Aquarioli*, that bring water from place to place, we tell him, this is our desire; but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to passe, we know not, and yet we trust such a one: for, we say, He is an honest man of his word, and if hee have undertaken it, it is enough. Why will you not trust *God*, that goes so much beyond us, that hath an infinite wisedome, and an infinite power? And therefore we should so use the meanes, that withall we keepe our dependance upon him, that we leave it to him, to use this or that meanes as it pleaseth him. For sometimes, it may be, he takes away that which we are about, sometimes he leaves us partly destitute, and findes a way of his owne, that we might trust to him, and consider his power, and his wisedome, what he is able to doe. So much likewise shall serve for this Case.

Wee are more apt to trust men than God.

Why God works not by our meanes.

Case 8. About praying in faith, when a man wants a particular promise, that the thing which he asketh shall be granted.

Another Case is, What it is to pray in faith? You know that is required. Now there is a common errour in this point: for a man may say, If I pray for the salvation of another, I have no promise, how can I pray in faith? When a man prayes to be guided in such a businesse, to have such an enterprise to be brought to passe, to have deliverance from such a trouble, such a sicknesse,

neſſe, from ſuch a calamity, that he lyes under, hee findes no particular promiſe, and, for ought hee knowes, it ſhall never be granted: How can hee bee ſaid to pray in faith? For, to pray in faith, is to beleeve, that the thing ſhall bee done.

Anſw. I anſwer, that to pray in faith, is to goe as farre as the promiſe goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promiſe, that hee ſhall have ſuch a deliverance, that he ſhall have ſuch a particular mercy granted him; and therefore it is not required to beleeve that that particular thing ſhould be done.

Object. What faith is required in prayer

But you will ſay, What faith is it then that is required?

Anſw. I ſay, it is enough to beleeve that *God* is a Father, that hee is ready to heare, and not onely that hee is ready to heare, but that hee is ready to doe that which is beſt for mee, in ſuch a particular: for both are required, that you beleeve him to bee well affected towards you, as a Father, as one that tenders your good, and not onely ſo, but that hee will doe that, in that particular, that ſhall be moſt for his owne glory, and for your good: and, if you doe ſo, you pray in faith; though, for the particular, you know not, whether it ſhall be granted, or no. Indeed, if we had a particular promiſe, as *Elias* had that it ſhould not raine, &c. in that caſe, we were bound to beleeve in particular, but not having that, wee are not tyed unto it: for the promiſe is the object of faith, and the habit is

Wee are not bound to beleeve, that the particular thing ſhall be granted which wee pray for.

not to worke beyond the object; for the object is the rule, and the limit of the habit: therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you have no ground to believe, and to thinke, that that particular thing ſhould be granted. For example, if a father pray, that his ſonne may have grace wrought in his heart, that his ſoule may bee ſaved, it may be the *Lord* will never doe it; or, if one friend pray for another to the ſame purpoſe, though the thing be not done, yet the prayer returnes into his boſome, hee is no loſer by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for ſeeking to *God* in ſincerity, it is his duty, that hee ſhould doe ſo. The like I may ſay for every particular caſe. And this incouragement you may have, that there is never any particular prayer put up, wherein you ſeeke things that are not granted, but you miſtake in it: for, if you believe thus farre, as I ſaid to you, be ſure that your prayers are accepted, *God* will doe that which is beſt for you, and your prayers ſhall not be loſt. So much alſo for that.

If our prayers be not granted we miſtake in them.

Caſe. 9. About a mans knowledge that his prayer is heard.

The laſt Caſe is, How ſhall a man know whether his prayer be heard, or not?

Anſw. For anſwer to this we will give you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) that thoſe prayers that are made by the aſſiſtance of *Gods* holy Spirit, it is certaine, they are alwayes heard: If you finde that at any time, you neede make no queſtion, but that *God* heares it, and will doe the thing, obſerving the Cautions that we have given you heretofore, that is, for the meanes,

meanes, the manner, the time, and the measure: for it cannot be, but that when the heart is inlarged by *Gods* owne Spirit, that the prayer is an expression of holy desires, the *Lord* alwayes heares. That place is cleare for it, *Rom.* 8.27. that *He knowes the meaning of the spirit:* that is, he so knowes it, that hee hearkeneth to it, that he alwayes accepts of it: and therefore, when you come in such a case, at any time, that your hearts are inlarged in a speciall manner: Marke, I say, when your hearts are inlarged in a speciall manner, and that, with holy desires, certainely, then *God* meanes to grant our requests: he would not send his spirit to be an intercessor in your hearts, if hee did not meane to doe it: for, in that case, hee withholds his spirit, hee gives us not that inlargement of heart. Onely this distinction must be carefully remembred; you may be sometime very earnest, (the parent may be very earnest for his childe, as *David* was for his; And *Moses*, for ought we see, was earnest to have gone into the land of *Canaan*, they were things that they desired) and yet that may be an expression of naturall desires.

Rom. 8.27.

When God will grant our prayers, and when not.

Note.

In that case, a man may be very earnest, and yet he cannot build upon it, to say, my heart is much inlarged in prayer, and therefore I shall be heard; but take in this, when the heart is inlarged with holy desires, and that in a speciall manner, somewhat more than ordinary, as that, you see, it is the worke of the spirit of *God*, quickning your heart, opening it wide, strengthening, and

What kinde of inlargement of heart argues that our prayers are heard.

inlargeing it, and ſharpening grace and holineſſe in you, in thoſe requeſts you put up to *God*; in this caſe, build upon it, your prayers are heard from that ground wee have given you, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit.* So much ſhall ſerve for thoſe Caſes of Conſcience in this ſpirituall duty of calling upon *God.*

Qualifications or conditions required in that prayer that ſhall be accepted.

Now the laſt thing wee propounded was this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for now we have ſaid ſo much of prayer, it is a neceſſary thing that wee know what conditions are required, that it may be acceptable.

1 *Caution.* That the perſon be right.

Iam. 5 16.

And the firſt (we will commend to you, that which is the ground and firſt in order before all the reſt) is, that the perſon be right. *The prayer of the righteous prevailes much, Iames 5.16.*

1 Becauſe a man muſt have Chriſt, before he have any thing elſe.

The ground of it is this; a man muſt firſt have Chriſt, before he can have any thing elſe, *He hath given us all things elſe with Chriſt:* If we have all things elſe, if we have not him, it is nothing: *All the promiſes,* you know, *are Yea, and Amen,* but it is *in him*; ſo that we muſt firſt have him.

2 The generall Covenant is before the particular.

And beſides, the generall Covenant muſt goe before the particular: for the ground of all prayer is this or that particular promiſe, but you muſt firſt be within the Covenant, you muſt firſt have the generall Covenant belonging to you, before you can have the particular branches of it; & therfore a man muſt be within the Covenant, his perſon muſt be firſt righteous, and be accepted: & therefore let none deceive themſelves in this caſe, to thinke

thinke thus with himselfe, he hopes his heart is sincere, and his prayer is right, and his ends are good: for though all this were true, yet if his person be not right, *God* regards it not. You know the blood of a sheepe, and the blood of a swine, they are both alike, it may be, the blood of the swine is better than the other: yet the blood of the swine was not to be offered, because it was the blood of a swine. So in this case, the prayer of an unregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions, for every thing that is required immediatly to a prayer: but the heart, from whence it comes, the person, from whence it proceedes, that is it that makes the difference: and therefore that must be observed, see the person be right. And therefore you shall finde, *Psal.* 4. 3. *David* makes that the ground, why his prayers should be heard: saith he, *Be ye sure that God hath chosen for himselfe the godly man: And when I call upon him, I shall be heard*: for that is the ground that hee takes to himselfe, that hee shall be heard, that *God* hath chosen to himselfe the godly man. As if he should say, I am of the number, and therefore you that are my enemies, and thinke to prevaile against me, I feare you not, for I pray to a *God* that will defend mee, I am a godly man, and upon that ground I beleeve that my prayer is heard. *Beloved*, otherwise, though we pray, and pray hard, yet our sinnes cry lowder than our prayers, they cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noise than they, that the noise that our sinnes make is like the noise of a Thunder,

Simile.

An unregenerate man may frame a prayer as well as a holy man.

Psal. 4 3.

Our sins outcry our prayers till our persons be right.

Simile.

when the noise of our prayers is but like the crackling of thornes, that it cannot be heard for the noise that sin makes in the eares of the *Lord*: Thus it is, in this case, when wee come before *God* in our sinnes, when a man comes into his presence in his unregeneracy.

2 Remove particular sinnes.

But this is not all, but likewise, a man that is within the Covenant, may have a particular sin, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his prayers, and that may hinder the blessing: so that, that sinne must be removed, before his prayers can be heard. It is true, *The sonne abides in the house for ever*, but yet the sonne may commit such an offence, that his father may use him as a servant, hee may deny his requests, and refuse them, when hee comes to seeke any thing at his hands. And therefore, there must be a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that sinne must be removed, and done away, that stands in the way. And therefore, this method the Saints have kept in calling upon *God*: See in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the most part, when they make any compleat prayer, we see, still they begin with humiliation, and confession of sinnes. And the reason of it is, that their persons might be cleare and innocent, that those sinnes might be removed, which would stand in their way; and likewise, that is a ground of that the 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. saith the Apostle there, *I will, that prayers be made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*: The meaning is this, not onely that a man be within the Covenant, but that

Why the Saints begin their prayers with humiliation.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

that he be cleansed from all particular sinnes, that might cleave to him, and hang upon him. As, for example, when thou wouldest be accepted of *God*, if there be any particular sinne hang on thee, that must be removed by renewing thy repentance: and besides that, see what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart must be cleansed from pride, (for *God resists the proud*) his heart must be brought to an humble disposition; likewise it must be cleansed from wrath, hee must *lift up pure hands without wrath*; that is oft required: *Matth.* 5. *Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy brother.* So likewise from unthankfulnesse; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankfull for mercies received. The like wee may say of every particular case: wee must be carefull to cleanse our selves from all sinfull lusts, and corrupt affections, that they have not dominion in our hearts, but that we lift up pure hearts, and innocent hands: and that is the first thing that is required, that the person be right; that is, not onely that hee be within the Covenant, but likewise that those particular sinnes be removed, that may be an impediment to his prayers.

When we pray we must cleanse our hearts.

1 From pride.

2 From wrath. Mat. 5. 23, 24.

3 From unthankfulnesse.

The second thing required is faith; *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting.* You know that in *Iames*, *Let him aske of God, let him aske in faith, and waver not.* So that though prayer be the key to open *Gods* treasures, yet faith is the hand that turnes the key, without which it will doe no good.

2. Requisite or condition is faith. Iames 1. 5, 6.

Simile.

Now

Why the Lord requires faith in prayer.

Now the *Lord* requires faith, partly, for his owne ſake, he ſhould not otherwiſe be acknowledged, if you did not truſt him, when you come to ſeeke him, if you did not reſt upon him. Beſides, hee ſhould loſe his glory; for in this wee glorifie him, when we truſt him, and wee diſhonour him; when we diſtruſt him; when we come, and ſeeke to him, and doe not reſt upon him, we diſhonour him.

1

2

Beſides, in regard of us he requires faith, and will not heare us without it; becauſe, as it is *Iames* 1.6. in the ſame place, where faith is required, there is good reaſon why it is required; for, ſaith the Apoſtle there, *He that beleeves not, or he that wavers, hee is like a wave of the ſea:* that is, ſometimes in his prayer he is very earneſt, as a wave that ſwells high; ſometimes againe he will be nothing at all; yea, ſaith the Apoſtle, he is not onely uneven in the buſineſſe of prayer, ſometimes earneſt and forward, and ſometimes giving over againe, off and on, but ſuch a man is unſtable in all his wayes; for he that truſts in *God*, will be carefull, not onely in prayer, but to keepe all his wayes right; but hee that truſts him not, wavers in every thing: he is (it may be) diligent in prayer, hee will looke to his wayes for a time, but hee reſts not upon *God*, hee reſts upon other things, *Hee is like a wave*, hee is not conſtant: and therefore faith is required. Now, when I ſay faith is required, know this, that there is a double faith required.

3

Iames 1.6.

A twofold faith required in our prayers.

The one is a faith in the providence of *God*, the other is a faith in his promiſe. First,

First, I say, faith in the providence, which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it. Wee see it cleerely, *Psal.* 146. *Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Iacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, who keepes Covenant, and mercy for ever:* you see faith there required in the providence, *He made heaven and earth, the sea;* he is such a *God,* who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he not able to doe any thing besides?

1 Faith in Gods providence. Psal. 146:5,6.

Secondly, there must be a faith in his promises, as is expressed in the other words, *He keepeth Covenant for ever.* So likewise, to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha* and *Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleeved he was ready enough to doe it, (there was faith in his willingnesse) but they wanted faith in his providence; for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, *Lord,* saith shee, *Hee hath beene in the grave foure dayes:* as if she had said, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might have beene brought to passe: so she beleeved him to be willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

2 Faith in the promises.

Againe, as here faith in the providence was wanting, so we see, in the Leper, there was faith in the providence, (it may be, the other was wanting, but that is not expressed, it is more probable hee had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole.* Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, he acknowledgeth his power, *If thou wilt, thou canst make mee whole:* but because Christ did answere him, it is likely hee had faith

faith in the promiſe too; ſo, I ſay, there muſt be a faith, firſt, in the providence; ſecondly, there muſt be a faith alſo in the promiſe of God: you have ground enough for that, you have his ſure word for it; he hath ſaid, *Aske and ye ſhall have, ſeeke and yee ſhall finde, knocke and it ſhall be opened to you; and whatſoever you aske, if it be according to his will, it ſhall be done to you.* So that is the thing wee are chiefly to looke unto, to conſider this faith in Gods promiſe; for men are ready to ſay, I doubt not but God is able, but all the queſtion is, whether he be willing or no. And therefore, if wee will have our prayers ſtrong, and prevalent, we muſt be carefull to ſtrengthen our faith in his promiſe: for, as that is ſtrong, ſo our prayers doe more prevaile with God. It is a matter of much moment, and therefore we will ſhew briefly how your faith may be ſtrengthened, and likewiſe how you may know it.

Mat 7.7.

Wee doubt of Gods willingnes more than of his power to grant our requeſts.

How faith may be ſtrengthned in prayer. From Gods Attributes. Which are of two ſorts. 1. Abſolute.

Firſt, you ſhall ſtrengthen your faith, if you conſider the nature of God. *Beloved*, this is a great cauſe why wee beleeve not the promiſe of God, and his readineſſe to helpe us in difficult caſes, becauſe wee are ignorant of the nature of God, of the Attributes of God, or at leaſt, we doe not conſider them. For example, (that I may open it to you a little, and ſhew you the way of making uſe of the Attributes of God, in calling upon him, & ſtrengthening our faith from them) conſider, firſt, the *Juſtice* of God, (I will give you examples, how the Saints have ſtill ſtrengthened their faith from *Gods* Attributes) *David* uſeth this

Argument

Argument, *Lord, thou art Iust, I am Innocent:* when hee telleth *God* of his Iuſtice, and withall expreſſeth his owne Innocencie, it is a ſtrong Argument. *David*, you ſee, uſeth it oft, (I need not to name particulars) *Lord reward me according to mine Innocency, &c. thou knowest I am righteous,* and mine enemies have done me thus and thus much wrong, & thou art juſt: *God* cannot deny this; for it is a ſtrong Argument, that is taken from ſuch an Attribute. 1. Iuſtice.

So againe, the *goodneſſe* of *God*; *Lord, thou art full of mercie*; on the other ſide, *I am full of miſerie:* and when theſe are put together, it is a great meanes to ſtrengthen our faith. And therefore, we ſee, *David* often expreſſeth his owne calamity, his diſeaſe, how he was oppreſſed by enemies, and ſlandered, &c. and *Gods* mercie, (that is the ground of it,) *God is full of compaſſion:* as if he ſhould ſay, thou art full of goodneſſe, and I am in calamitie, and miſerie, at this time: and that was an Argument whereby he ſtrengthened his faith. 2. Mercy.

So againe, another Attribute of *God* is, his *glory:* when we make the Argument thus, *Lord*, thou haſt an eye to thy glory, and I aime at thy glory: In ſuch a requeſt, it is a ſtrong prevailing Argument with him. You know, *Moſes* prevailed with him, when he ſought the ſaving of the whole people of *Iſrael*, *Lord*, ſaith he, *thy Name will be polluted, what will the Heathen ſay?* And ſince I aime at thy glory in it, deny me not. And likewiſe *Ezekias*, and *David*, they uſe the ſame Argument 3. Glory.

gument to *God, Shall the dust praise thee?* shall any glory be given to thee in the grave? shall we be able to doe any thing for thy honour, when we are dead? So that the Arguments that are taken from *Gods* glory, and our aime at his glory, is another meanes to strengthen our faith.

4. Power. Moreover, the *power* of *God*, that is another Attribute, whereby we may conceive the same Argument, as before, when we goe to *God*, and expresse our weakenesse, and his power; *Lord*, we are weake, we are able to doe nothing: *Lord*, thou art almighty, thou madest heaven and earth, it is a strong Argument to prevaile with him. So, we

2 Chron. 14, 11 see, *Asa* prevailed with *God*, 2 *Chron.* 14. *Oh Lord*, saith hee, *it is all one with thee to helpe with many or few*, and we rest upon thee: as if he should say, We are exceeding few, we are exceeding weake, we are able to doe nothing, but thou art able to doe it, with a few, as well as with a great multitude; there he puts them together. And the like

2 Chron 20. 12. we have of *Iehosaphat*, *Lord, we have no strength to stand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee*: As if he should say, thou hast strength and power enough, thou art able to doe it, though we are unable. This is another Argument taken from the power of God.

5. Vnchangeableness. Againe, the *unchangeableneſſe* of God. When one comes to the *Lord*, and shall say to him, *Lord*, thou hast done thus and thus in former times for thy servants, *Lord*, thou hast done thus and thus for me, in another case; and thou art unchangeable, thou art the same God: this is a great meanes

meanes to ſtrengthen our faith. As you know, it is in your Law-ſuites, when you have a preſident, it addes ſtrength to the cauſe, and when we have preſidents for this, it will adde ſtrength to us, and that ſtrength is taken from *Gods* unchangeableneſſe: if we put them together, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, *Lord*, thou haſt done it to other men in the like caſe, thou haſt done it to me alſo in the like caſe; it is a ſtrong Argument, and an Argument that *David* uſeth: You ſee how he is ſtayed by it, *Pſal.* 22. 4. *Lord, our fathers truſted in thee, and were delivered, they truſted in thee, and were not confounded.* As if he ſhould ſay, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, thou heardeſt them in the ſame caſe, when they truſted in thee; now, it is my caſe, and therefore I beſeech thee to helpe mee in my diſtreſſe.

Simile.

Pſal. 22. 4.

Againe, the *faithfulneſſe* of *God*, the fidelity of *God*, that is another of his Attributes: and when wee make our Argument thus; *Lord*, thou art faithfull, and I truſt in thee, it is a ſtrong Argument, you know, it is an Argument that prevailes much with men. A man is ready to ſay, he truſts mee, I muſt not deceive him: Now the *Lord* keepes Covenant, and mercy for ever. When wee come, and uſe this to him, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, thou haſt ſaid, thou wilt keepe Covenant, and mercy for ever, thou canſt not doe otherwiſe, it is thy nature, thou canſt not deny thy ſelfe, and I reſt on thee, I depend on thee; in ſuch a caſe, it cannot be, the *Lord* ſhould faile us: If a man will not faile one that truſts in him, certainely

6. Faithfulnes.

certainely the *Lord* will not, and that is an Argument that is uſed oft, thou never faileſt them that truſt thee.

2. Relative. Then, beſides the abſolute Attributes of *God*, conſider his relative Attributes; he is a *Father*, and a *Maſter*: it is a ſtrong Argument that is taken from theſe. If we goe to the *Lord*, and ſay, *Lord*, thou art a Father, thou art a Maſter, thou art a Husband; Whither ſhould the children goe, but to their father? Whither ſhould the wife goe, but to her Husband? Whither ſhould the ſervants goe, but to their maſter, to their Lord? *Lord*, thou haſt commanded us to provide for our owne, and, *He is worſe than an Infidel that provides not for his owne.* *Lord*, wee belong to thee, wee are thine. We ſee, *David* uſeth this Argument, that *God had made him.* You have it oft in the Pſalmes, that *God* had made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his Servant; *I am thy Servant*: hee uſeth oft this Relative, that *God* was his *God*, and that hee was *Gods* ſervant, one that did belong to him, and that did depend upon him. And ſurely (my Beloved) dependance, and ſeeeking to *God*, is a great meanes to winne him to us. When wee ſee an other depend upon us, one that is ours, that is an effectuall motive with men: the ſame is as prevalent with *God*; and therefore may ſtrengthen our faith. Now, when I ſay theſe Arguments prevaile with *God*, the meaning is indeede, that they prevaile with us, they ſtrengthen our faith, they enable us to beleeve, that *God* is ready to helpe

Arguments in prayer ſtrengthen our faith.

helpe us, and when wee beleeve it, and truſt upon him, then indeede *God* is readie to ſecond it; becauſe then we are prepared, wee can then put up our deſires in the prayer of faith: otherwiſe they are put up with doubting, and that makes them unacceptable to *God*, and uneffectuall. And now, as I have ſhewed you the way, ſo likewiſe in a word, we will ſhew you when we doe pray in faith, (for that is a thing that is very uſefull) you ſhall know it by this: (for I adde that, becauſe I ſee the Scripture requires it, as ſuch a maine condition, without which a man cannot be accepted, *Be it done to thee according to thy faith*, it is every where inculcated) you ſhall know it by the quietneſſe of your minde, and your ſecurity. When a man calls upon *God*, and his minde is quiet in it, it is a ſigne that he beleeves, and truſts in him, it is a prayer of faith. *Hannah*, you know, in that caſe, ſhee *looked no more ſad*, becauſe ſhee truſted in *God*, ſhee beleeved the thing ſhould be done; and therefore, if you finde ſolicitude and perplexity in your mindes, it is a ſigne that your prayers want ſo much faith; for if you did reſt upon *God*, you would be quiet, and ſecure in him.

How wee may know that wee pray in faith.

1 By the quietneſſe of the minde after.

Secondly, if you doe beleeve, you will continue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of the faith of the woman of *Canaan*, that ſhe continued, that ſhe would take no deniall; though the *Lord* denied her, and put her off, yet ſhee held out: and what was the reaſon of it? becauſe ſhe beleeved that he was the ſonne of *David*, that he

2 By continuance in prayer.

was mercifull, and that hee would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer, it is an argument wee doe beleeve the *Lord*. As a man that beleeves, that such a man is within the house whom he desires to speake with, he is content to wait long: Or one, that hath a suit, and he knowes that hee shall have an end of it, at this time, hee will never give over: So it is in this case, if wee beleeve, we will be content to waite, *He that beleeves will not make haste*, because he trusts in *God*, and depends upon him.

Simile.

Esay 28.

3 Diligence in the use of the meanes.

Likewise, an argument of faith is a diligent use of those meanes that *God* hath prescribed, and no other. And so we have shewed you two things that are required in prayer: That the person must be righteous, and within the Covenant: Secondly, faith is required, and likewise how this faith is wrought, both in his providence, and in his promises, and likewise how wee shall know, whether our prayers bee the prayers of faith, or no.

FINIS.

THE

THE FIFTH SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THE next condition required in prayer is *fervency*; you know the place, *The prayer of the righteous prevailes much, if it be fervent.* The *Lord* requires this qualification in prayer, becauſe it puts the heart into a holy and ſpirituall diſpoſition: for it is not ſimply the making of the requeſt, that *God* lookes for at our hands, but ſuch a working upon our hearts by prayer, ſuch a bringing of them to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby wee are more fitted to receive the mercy,

3. Condition required in prayer is fervency. Iames 5.16.

What God requires in praier

that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it sets all the wheeles of the soule the right way, it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition and temper; so that the *Lord* sees it now fit to bestow mercy upon such a man, that before was unfit, by reason of his untowardnesse, and stubbornesse of heart, by reason of that uncleane and unholy disposition, that he saw in him. And therefore hee will have prayer fervent; not so much because the very fervency of prayer it selfe is respected, but because by vertue of that fervencie the heart is made better: when a man comes to *God* with a request, like the request of the patient to the physitian, it may be the physitian denies long, when the patient askes things that are pleasant and agreeable to him; not because he is unwilling to give them, but because his body must be brought into another temper, he must take a vomit, or a purge, that perhaps is grievous to him, but this must be done before he be fit to receive such cordialls: so the *Lord* doth with his servants, though hee bee willing to bestow such mercies on them, yet, because they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervencie in it. Therefore, we say, in prayer all the graces of *Gods* Spirit are set on worke, and the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increased; and therefore the *Lord* is moved by this fervency, to bestow a mercie on us, that otherwise hee would not doe.

Why God requires fervency.

Simile.

But

But now all the queſtion is, what this fervencie is?

Queſt.

You ſhall find it uſually expreſſed in the Scriptures by ſuch metaphors as theſe, *Crying to the Lord, wreſtling with the Lord, ſtriving with him,* and *giving him no reſt*; wherein theſe two things are to be marked.

Anſw. When a man is ſaid to be fervent

Firſt, a man is ſaid then to be fervent, when he puts all his ſtrength to prayer, when hee is very earneſt, and importunate with the *Lord*, when hee ſtrives, and contends with him, though he finde many difficulties, and impediments, yet he breakes through all; this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the *Lord*. For example, when a man comes to pray, and findes many diſcouragements, and findes himſelfe guilty of many ſinnes, and findes little holineſſe, he hath but feeble faith to his owne ſenſe, he findes much deadneſſe of ſpirit, yet he continues inſtant notwithſtanding; and when likewiſe hee doth not onely finde theſe impediments in himſelfe, but hee findes the *Lord* exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no anſwer, turning the deafe eare to him, or it may be, giving a contrary anſwer, as to the woman of *Canaan*.

1 When wee put to all our ſtrength notwithſtanding difficulties.

Mat. 15.

As for example, when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his ſicknes increaſeth upon him more; when he prayes to overcome ſuch a luſt or temptation, it may be, it is doubled upon him; when hee prayes for ſuch a deliverance, it may be, the oppreſſion growes more and more; as it was with the *Iſraelites*, when they ſought for deliverance,

verance, the oppreſſion grew greater: now to holde out notwithſtanding this, and to continue in prayer, and to out wraſtle *God* in it, though he ſeeme backward to the requeſt, this is to be fervent in prayer.

2 When wee are conſtant.

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not onely importunate with the *Lord*, but hee continues long, hee will not give over, till hee have got the bleſſing. You know, *Iacobs* fervencie was ſeene in that, that he continued all night, *He wreſtled with the Lord*. What was the reaſon that he wreſtled? *Hee would not let him goe, till he had got the bleſſing*, till he had obtained the thing he ſought for. So I ſay, this earneſtneſſe, and continuance in prayer, the breaking through all difficulties, this is to wraſtle with the *Lord*: for, all wraſtling, and ſtriving, you know, ſuppoſeth ſome oppoſition on the other part. Indeede, if there were no oppoſition, it were a ſmall thing; but, I ſay, when the *Lord* is moſt backward, when the thing is moſt improbable, when there is much difficultie, that you know not how it ſhould be brought to paſſe, yet you continue ſtriving, and give the *Lord* no reſt, you will not give over; this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the *Lord* requires. Onely theſe two Cautions muſt be remembred, that we miſtake not this fervency.

Cautions about fervency.

1 That it be a fruit of faith.

Simile.

First, remember, fervencie, if it be right, it muſt be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervencie that comes not from faith, but from a naturall ſenſe of want, when a man is indeede as a ſwine that

that is pinched, which, you know, will cry exceeding loud, not because it lookes for helpe, but because it is pinched: so any creature, or man naturally will use importunity, when he wants any thing, he will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the *Lord* regards not, because there is no more but a meere expression of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the Spirit, but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sense of the thing wee want, but also a hope of mercie, a ground to beleeve that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate, now earnestnesse is a fruite of faith. When Iesus Christ lived upon earth, when men came and cryed earnestly unto him, and were exceeding importunate, some to be healed of their diseases, some to have divells cast out, &c. we see his answere was still to them, Be it to thee, (how?) not according to their importunity, and fervency, but according to their faith: as if he should say, I heede not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they be onely expressions of such wants, if they be onely in the sense of such neede, and no more; but if they proceede from faith, and that faith set you on worke to call upon mee, *Be it unto thee according to that*: For indeede, these two things make up fervency in prayer, sense of neede, and hope of mercie, when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervencie; and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other, (not that I exclude the other, for it is a very great helpe, and

When fervency is a fruit of faith.

Whence fervency springs.

Simile. that which puts sticks on the fire, as it were, to make our fervency the more) I say from sense of our need, when we consider seriously what want wee have, and then adde this hope, and faith; when these two shall set you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. This is one caution that must be remembred.

2. *Caution.* That it bee mingled with sincerity.

Another Caution is this, that your fervency be joyned with sincerity; for a man may be fervent to obtaine such and such blessings, as he may begge at *Gods* hand very earnestly; hee may aske credit, he may aske to have guidance in such a businesse, he may aske wisdome to bring such an enterprise to passe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may bestow it upon his lusts, if it be that he may live more deliciously, that he may be some body more in the world, that he may have outward conveniences, such as his flesh desires, if this be all, here this fervency is not regarded; *Note.* not that these things are excluded, for the *Lord* gives us leave to seeke our owne comforts, and you may be earnest, and importunate, even for the comfort it selfe; but yet all these, if they be not capable of a further use, if that be not intended, but the abuse of them, and an intent to use them another way, the *Lord* heedes it not, it is no true fervencie. And therefore in *Rom.* 12.11. it is the exhortation of the Apostle, *Be fervent in spirit serving the Lord*; when wee many times, it may be, are fervent in spirit serving our selves, we are fervent to aske such and such requests, out

Rom. 12.11.

of

ofends of our owne, as when a man desires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himselfe, and not to serve his master, this is to aske the talent, not for his masters use, but for his owne use; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare such prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You shall see the contrary disposition in the Saints; when they were earnest with the *Lord* for any thing, still they expresse that to him, and say, *Lord,* wee desire not this for our selves, but for thy glorie, that wee may use it for some good purpose, &c. *David,* when he was earnest for life, when he was in sickness, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth he use? *Lord,* saith he, *shalt thou have glory in the grave?* As if hee should say, if thou give me life, I will give it thee againe, I will improve it, and husband it to thy advantage, and not to my owne. And so *Hannah,* when she was earnest for a sonne, she makes this promise to the *Lord,* that he shall be for him, and his advantage; she would dedicate him to his use, and consecrate him to his service. So *Iacob,* when hee was earnest with the *Lord* to give him meate, drinke, and cloathes, &c. *Lord,* saith he, *if thou doe, I will give the tenth part to thee againe.* I say, when the heart is thus disposed in our fervencie, in our importunitie, when we aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conscience tells us within, that if wee had it, wee would bestow it upon the *Lord,* wee would not abuse it, wee would not spend it on our lusts, it should not be to serve our selves, but to serve the *Lord* with-

What arguments the Saints have used in their prayers.

all,

all, then our fervency is rightly ordered.

4 Condition required in prayer is humility. Iam. 4. 2 Chron. 7. 14.

The next condition required, is *humility*, as *Iames* 4. *The Lord gives grace to the humble:* And 2 *Chron* 7. 14. *If my people humble themselves, and call upon my name, then will I heare in heaven, and grant their requests.* And throughout the Scripture, you see, that this is a condition that the *Lord* puts in every where; *Hee hath respect to the low estate, Isay* 66. 2. saith the *Lord, All these things have my hands made,* looking upon all the creatures, the whole frame of them, they are all good, and I have respect unto them; but, saith he, I regard not all these in comparison of an humble heart, *To him will I looke that is of an humble and contrite spirit:* when the *Lord* lookes upon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he lookes for: for *Hee gives grace to the humble*; because such a man is little in his owne eyes, and fit to be exalted, fit to receive a mercy at *Gods* hands.

Isay 66. 2.

Reasons why humility is required in prayer.

I God exalts such.

You know, it is a rule that the *Lord* keepes for such as are humble and low, such he exalts; those that exalt themselves he puts downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that parvity, that sense of his owne unworthinesse is a prevailing argument with him; and therefore *Gen.* 32. *Iacob* useth that Argument, when hee comes to put up that petition, to be delivered from *Esau: Lord, I am lesse than all thy mercies:* that is, take any of thy mercies, and put them in one end of the ballance, and put me in the other, and I am lesse than it, and lighter than it, take all

Gen. 32.

the worth that is in mee, it is not heavie enough for the leaſt mercie. Now, when hee was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his owne eyes, the *Lord* beſtowed that mercie on him, hee was now fit to receive it. So *David*, when the *Lord* ſends him word by *Nathan*, that he would *build him a houſe for ever*, (you ſee how hee expreſſed himſelfe) *Hee went into the houſe of the Lord, and ſate before him, and ſaid, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers houſe?* As if he ſhould ſay, I was taken out of the duſt, I was one of the meaneſt men of *Iſrael*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou haſt had reſpect unto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people, but to build my Kingdome, and my houſe, to make me a conſtant houſe for ever. I ſay, this ſenſe of our owne unworthineſſe, it makes us more fit to receive the mercie, to be exalted by receiving ſuch a requeſt, as wee put up to the *Lord*, and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble. 2 Sam. 7. 18.

Moreover, *God gives grace to the humble*, that is, he ſhewes favour to them, when they come and aske any thing at his hands, becauſe an humble man will be ready to doe whatſoever he will. It is an expreſſion of *David*, in *Acts* 13. 22. *Hee will doe whatſoever I will*: that may be ſaid of every humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the *Lords* will, hee is ready to doe whatſoever he knowes to be his pleaſure, hee reſiſts him in nothing. Now, when a man will doe whatſoever *God* will, the *Lord* will be ready to doe whatſoever 2 God gives grace to ſuch. Acts 13. 22.

ver he will, he will be ready to say to him, as he
Mat. 15,28. did to the *Canaanite*, *Oh woman, bee it to thee as thou wilt.* When a man, on the other side, resists the *Lord*, (as every proud man doth, saith the text) the *Lord resists* him, the *Lord resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.* A resisting spirit causeth the *Lord* to resist our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, because he yeelds to the *Lord* in all things; and when a man yeelds to the *Lord*, (take that for a rule) in obeying *Gods* commandements, *God* will yeeld to us in granting our petitions.

Note.

3
It is an acceptable sacrifice.

Besides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable sacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he smells a sweete savour from such a sacrifice above all other; yea it is that which sets a high price upon every sacrifice that wee offer; the best prayers, the best workes, that proceede not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Psal.* 51. *Lord*,
Psal. 51. 16, 17. saith he, *if I offer sacrifice, thou wilt not regard it*, but *the sacrifices of a contrite*, and humble *spirit*, those thou regardest, and those sacrifices that proceede from it. When we come to make a petition to the *Lord*, (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a proud person comes empty-handed, but an humble person comes with a sacrifice, and the best sacrifice; because he sacrificeth himselfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himselfe of himselfe, he opens a doore to the *Lord* to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; such a sacri-

fice

fice the *Lord* is well pleaſed with, and ſuch a ſacrifice ſpeakes for one, it makes way for his requeſts, and therefore the *Lord* hearkens to it.

Laſtly, the *Lord* is ready to heare thoſe that are humble, becauſe whatſoever they receive, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himſelfe, a man that is lift up in his owne opinion, thinkes it to be due, he thinkes there is ſome correſpendence betweene his works, and the wages. You know what is ſaid of the *Phariſee*, that *the Publican went away juſtified rather than he.* Why ſo? Becauſe the *Publican* thought himſelfe worthy of nothing. And therefore *Ezek.* 36. 31. when the *Lord* promiſeth thoſe great mercies to his people, he requires this condition of them, that they ſhould *acknowledge themſelves worthy to be deſtroyed.* When a man hath a ſenſe of his owne unworthineſſe, and ſo comes to the *Lord*, and askes it as of meere grace and mercy, that is a great motive to prevaile with him: for he is very carefull of that. You know in *Deut.* 8. 11. how wary the *Lord* was in giving this rule to them; *Take heede when thou commeſt into that good land, thinke not to ſay with thy ſelfe, the Lord hath done this for my owne righteouſneſſe: No*, ſaith he, *I have not done it for that, but for my Covenant which I made with Abraham, Iſaac, & Iacob:* that is, for my owne names ſake, for my mercies ſake, for the covenant that I confirmed with them, that is the covenant in Ieſus Chriſt; therefore I have done it, and not for your owne righteouſnes. So you ſee, that this

4 They receive all as of free grace.

Luke 18.

Ezek. 36. 31.

Deut. 8. 11.

this is a condition the *Lord* will have obſerved in our calling upon him, that our hearts be humbled, that a man be little, and vile in his owne eyes; that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is ſo diſpoſed, hee gives grace, that is, he ſhewes favour, he is ready to grant our requeſts.

5. Condition required in prayer is, to ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts.

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee *ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts.* You know, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* drew neere unto him with a common fire, (when they ſhould have brought ſuch fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the *Lord* deſtroyed them: and hee gives this reaſon; *For I will be ſanctified in thoſe that draw neere to me.* When we come to call upon the *Lord*, we know, then we come neere to him, and in ſuch drawing neere, wee muſt ſanctifie him in our hearts, that is, we muſt conceive him to be, as he is, moſt holy. Now if the *Lord* be moſt holy, if he that is uncleane and impure, and unholy, ſhall come neere him, hee ſanctifies not the *Lord God*, (that is) hee comes not to him as to a moſt holy *God*, but hee lookes upon him, as if he were a common perſon. And therefore whenſoever they came to offer a ſacrifice, in the old law, they were firſt purified; if any man were uncleane, and ſhould offer a ſacrifice, he was to be cut off from his people. Therefore, to ſanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in the 1 Tim. 2. 8. it is the charge that the Apoſtle gives there, *Lift up pure hands without wrath or doubting:*

1 Tim. 2. 8.

doubting: lift up pure hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath, or doubting.

You will ſay unto me, what is this holineſſe? Beloved, it is nothing but a ſequeſtring, or ſeperating any thing from a common uſe, and appropriating it to *God* alone, that is holineſſe. You know, whatſoever was holy to the *Lord*, in the Temple, or otherwiſe, whether it were holy veſſels, or holy men, as the Prieſts, it was ſeparated from all other uſes, and made peculiar to him, and to his ſervice. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things elſe, and peculiar to the *Lord* alone. As a chaſt wife is to her husband, whoſe affections are beſtowed upon him, and no other perſon elſe; ſo when the heart is to the *Lord* alone, when all the affections are intent upon him, and beſtowed upon him, and upon none elſe, this is to have the heart wholly to him. So that now hee that will have an eye upon credit, upon vaine glory, upon wealth, upon his luſts, upon any thing beſides the *Lord*, that the heart is wedded to it, that he beſtowes any part of that conjugall affection upon it, that ſhould be wholly the *Lords*, this man is an unholy man, his heart is not holy: for it is not ſequeſtred from other things, and conſecrated to him alone: for that is to be holy.

And as the heart muſt bee holy, ſo muſt the prayer be holy. When a man prayes to the *Lord* with reſpect unto him, and hath an eye upon him, and nothing elſe comes in to take away part of this prayer; if by-reſpect, and worldly, and carnall

Queſt. *Anſw.* Holines what.

1 The heart muſt be holy. *Simile.*

An unholy man who.

2 The prayer muſt be holy.

carnall thoughts come in, and set you on work to pray, now these have a portion & interest in your prayers, they make your prayers profane and common, they are not peculiar to the *Lord*, they are unholy. So that is the holines then in seeking the *Lord*, when we are knit, and wedded to him, when one takes this resolution to himselfe, I am the *Lords* servant, and him will I serve, I am not the servant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the *Lord*, and his will I be alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things else. So likewise when a man prayes, so that his soule is intent upon the *Lord*, and upon nothing besides, when the whole streame of his affections are carried to him, this is to seeke to him in holinesse, this is to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts.

Heb. 10. 2.

3 Particular sins must be repented of.

And lastly, if there be any *conscience of sinne*, (that phrase I finde used in *Heb.* 10.) that is, if there be an evill conscience, if a man be conscious to himselfe of any sinne that is unrepented of, such a man cannot pray, that makes him unholy: if there be any sinfull lust yet living in him, that is, unmortified in him, which is not washed away, such a man is unholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themselves, when they sinne against *God*, as you heard heretofore, they are suspended from the Covenant; though they be within the Covenant, yet they are suspended from receiving the benefit by it, that otherwise they might have: till that sinne be washed away, they are not holy. A Priest, or one that was holy, if hee touched any uncleane thing, hee remained unholy,

holy, till he was waſhed, though otherwiſe he were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to *Gods* ſervice; ſo it may be with thoſe, that are within the Covenant, though thou be a holy man, yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart be polluted with any ſinne, of one kinde or other, as long as that remaines, thou art unholy. If thou come now, and ſeeke to the LORD, you know what the judgement was in the old law, ſuch a one was to be cut off from his people. And therefore, you ſhall finde, this was the conſtant practiſe of the Saints, when they ſought the *Lord*, for any ſpeciall mercy, they began with taking paynes with their owne hearts, with humbling themſelves for their owne ſinnes, and the ſinnes of the people: as wee know, *Daniel* and *Ezra*, and *David*, in their prayers, (I neede not ſtand to give you inſtances) and indeede ſo ſhould we alwayes, when we come with any requeſt, and petition to the *Lord*.

The practiſe of holy men in their prayers.

Firſt, let a man examine his heart and his life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, conſider and goe through all the particulars; ſee if there be any thing amiſſe, if there be any tincture of uncleanneſſe yet lying upon him, that is not yet waſhed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of fleſh, or ſpirit; and let him know that it is but labour loſt, it is a provoking of the LORD, to come as a man unprepared, to drawe neere to him, except he be cleanſed.

But you will ſay, How ſhall we be cleanſed? *Queſt.*

Answ. I answere, you are clensed by renewing your repentance, and sprinkling the blood of Christ: when a man humbles himselfe for his sinne, and entreth into covenant with *God*, not to returne unto it, when he makes his heart perfect, and sincere with the *Lord* in that particular.

Meanes of cleansing a mans selfe.

1

2. And secondly, when he shall withall beleeve, that it is forgiven through Christ, when he is sprinkled with his blood to wash it away: though thy sinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art washed, as it is in the 1. *Cor.* 6. 9. *Now you are washed, now you are sanctified, now you are iustified:* therefore let not a man be discouraged in this case: for, I confesse, there is nothing that gives such a checke to our prayers, that giues so many stabbs to them (as it were) that hinders us in that duty, as the conscience of sinne, when a man remembers such and such a sinne he hath committed: yet be not discouraged; for the blood of *Iesus Christ*, is able to wash them away. Though a mans face be very fowle, yet, you know, a basen of cleare water will wash it cleane, and all the filth is gone: now the blood of CHRIST, is more effectuall to rense thy conscience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away, both the guilt of sinne, and likewise the power, and staine of it. And therefore, if thou haue any sinne, labour to be washed from it, that then thou mayst come to the LORD, having thy heart sprinkled from an evill conscience, and thy body washed in pure water, as it is *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw neere,* saith the Apostle, *in*

1 Cor. 6. 9.

Conscience of sinne a great hinderance in our prayers.

Simile.

Heb. 10 22.

in aſſurance of faith: but how? *Having our hearts ſprinkled from an evill conſcience:* as if he ſhould ſay, Otherwiſe your drawing neere will be to no purpoſe, you ſhall but provoke the LORD in drawing neere, except you be thus ſprinkled, and thus waſhed, and thus purified.

Obiect.

I, but you will ſay to me, if this be requyred, who ſhall be heard in his prayers? For who can ſay his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be requyred, that we muſt lift up holy, and pure hearts, or elſe we ſhall not be accepted; what comfort ſhall wee have in calling upon the *Lord*, at any time?

Anſw.

What it is to haue a pure heart.

To this I anſwere, that to have a pure heart, is not to be free from ſin, and from daily failings, (for ſo indeede none ſhould have a pure heart) but pureneſſe of heart, holineſſe of heart is, to have *our hearts ſprinkled from an evill conſcience, and to have our bodyes waſhed with pure water*, that is, to be purified before the *Lord*, is nothing elſe, but to have ſuch an habituall diſpoſition, which makes a man ready to waſh himſelfe ſtill, though he bee ſtill ſpotted with ſinne. So that this is the diſpoſition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the LORD with a pure heart, though he be ſtill ſpotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall diſpoſition, he hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is ſtill working out that impuritie, and waſhing it away; though ſtill he bee oppoſed, and aſſaulted, and tempted, and ſometimes foiled, yet ſtill he reſiſts it, and fights againſt it;

as the *Iſraelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amaleck*: ſuch a diſpoſition is in ſuch a man, he never makes peace with any ſinne; though he he be led captive ſometimes by it, yet he yeelds not to that captivity. This is to have a pure heart, though his heart be defiled ſometimes as a veſſell will be fowle, yet he waſheth, and renſeth his heart, he never ſuffers it to continue muddie, and uncleane, and in a filthy diſpoſition, but he hath a fountaine, a ſpring of grace within, that will worke out all impuritie, as a ſpring workes out mudde; hee that thus purifies himſelfe ſtill, though the fountaine be muddie, though there be many injections, many temptations, many luſts and ſinnes, yet, if he be purified himſelfe; that hee will ſuffer no ſinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to reſt there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye, and continue there, ſuch a man hath a pure heart. We ſay, that is pure, that is full of it ſelfe, and will have no *heterogenea*, no other thing mingled with it, ſuch a thing is pure, as pure oyle is nothing elſe but oyle. Now he that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath ſimply nothing elſe, that hath no ſinne mingled, that hath no droſſe mingled with his wine, but hee that ſuffers it not to reſt there; but as oyle and water, when you jumble them together, (as you know, when they are ſhaken together, they mingle) yet the oyle workes out, and purifies it ſelfe, it will not ſuffer it ſelfe to abide with the water: a man that is regenerate, a man that *is borne of God*, hath a ſeed remaining in him, though he doe ſin,

A holy heart never makes peace with ſin.

Purity what.

Simile.

ſin, yet, ſaith the Apoſtle, *he cannot ſinne*, that is, he doth not agree, he doth not mingle with that ſinne, it hath no reſt in his heart, but he workes it out; in a paſſion when he is ſhaken (as it were) when he is tranſported, when he is not himſelfe, there may be a mixture, and the fountaine, and the ſpring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himſelfe, ſtill he works it out; that is to haue a pure heart. So that a man thus affected may come with boldnes to the throne of grace, and not be diſcouraged; what though thy ſinnes be many, and very great, and often repeated? yet if thou finde in thy ſelfe ſuch a diſpoſition of purenelſe and holineſſe, ſtill to clenſe thy ſelfe, though thou be ſtill polluted and defiled, I can aſſure thee, thy heart is pure, thou mayſt go with confidence to the throne of grace.

But now you will ſay this to me, (for that may be obiected) why? but may not any carnall man ſay as much, he ſins againſt *God*, and comes and askes mercy, he comes and cries for forgivenes, and ſaith he will ſinne no more, and yet he ſinnes againe the next day, and *addes drunkenneſſe to thirſt*; that is, his ſinne and his repentance they runne in a circle, as drunkenneſſe and thirſt? how ſhall we diſtinguiſh then betweene theſe two, that purifiyng diſpoſition in the Saints, and thoſe vaniſhing purpoſes that carnall men may have, that never had experience of the worke of grace, of that purity of heart that we ſpeake of? *Obiect.*

To this I anſwere briefly, you ſhall know the *Anſw.*

Difference between the godly and others, in falling into ſinne.

difference by this, a godly man, when he falls into ſinne, and is defiled with it, hee waſheth himſelfe from day to day: you ſhall find alwayes this, that he gets ground of the ſinne, of the luſt, that manifeſts it ſelfe in any actuall tranſgreſſion, ſtill it loſeth by it, it gathers not ſtrength, but loſeth ſtrength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his ſinne ſtill increaſeth, and intends the habit, and the luſt growes ſtronger and ſtronger, it gets ground of him, and thoſe good things that he hath, they are more and more worne out, and ſo they grow worſe and worſe from day to day; and that is the property of an evill man, of unregeneracy whereſoever, it is apt to grow worſe and worſe, and the more falls they have, the more ſinne gets ground, and the more they loſe; but it is not ſo with an holy man, the more hee falls, the more ſtrength hee gathers, hee is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull, and the more hee is emptied of himſelfe, and drawes neerer to the *Lord*, and is the more inflamed with love of him, he is ſtrengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every grace: ſo that here the rule now holdes not true, that acts increaſe habits, but the contrary, acts leſſen the habits, which is a paradoxe in philoſophy, but here it is ſo.

Sinne in a carnal man grovveth ſtronger, in a godly man vveaker.

A paradoxe in philoſophy.

Queſt. If you aske how it can be?

Anſw. I anſwere, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to paſſe by accident, as wee ſay, becauſe the grace in him is ſtirred up, by thoſe

Hovv ſinne in a godly man is vveakned by his falls.

thoſe foiles, and ſlipps, and thoſe falles, and infirmities, to which he is ſubject: I ſay, grace is ſtirred up in him more and more, and receives more vigour, and ſtrength. As we ſay of true valour, it is increaſed more by oppoſition; ſo it comes to paſſe, that the more the child of *God* falls into ſinne, the more grace is intended, Sathan gets leſſe ground; as *Hezechiah*, when he fell into pride, the pride of his heart was leſſened more by it, than when he ſhewed his treaſure to the Ambaſſadour of the King of *Babell*, he knew not before the pride of his heart, that ſinne, that fall did manifeſt his corruption, which hee did not ſee before. So that when the heart is ſincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is ſet more on worke to reſiſt ſinne. So *David*, when he had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the *Lord* ſhewed him more mercy afterwards, than ever he did before, hee ſhewed him where the Temple ſhould bee built, and vſed him in that worke, and never ſhewed him ſuch mercy, and kindneſſe before: (I cannot ſtand to expreſſe particulars) ſo it is with all the Saints; their hearts are never better, nor in more holy temper, nor more fearefull to offend, and in a more gracious diſpoſition, than after their falls; and therefore conſider this, that thou bee not deceived, that thou mayſt diſtinguiſh betweene this falling into ſinne, and waſhing your ſelves, and that relapſe to which evill men are ſubject; and keepe that for a rule, that whereſoever there is true

Valour increaſed by oppoſition.

The heart of the godly beſt after falls.

Note. true grace, ſtill it ſtirres it ſelfe more and more, as it finds more reſiſtance, even as the winde and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water, when it findes a ſtop, it growes more violent, and ſo the wind; of the ſame nature is grace, where it findes a ſtop, and findes reſiſtance, it growes more ſtrong, and inrent. The heathen had a little glimpſe of this truth, when they ſaid of vertue, that it growes more freſh and vigorous by being wounded; that is true of grace and holineſſe, the true vertue, the more it is oppoſed, the more it growes: even as you ſee in oppoſition in the diſputes of ſchollers, and all kind of contentions in law, or any thing elſe; the ſtronger the objection is, where there is ability in the partie, it produceth new motions, and new anſwers, and puts them more to it; ſo theſe aſſaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holineſſe to *God*, and more ſtrength, it multiplyes the graces of *God* within: ſo that the graces receive increaſe, the more they are exerciſed, and intended, and ſinfull luſts decreaſe, the minde is more emptied forth, the chaffe that is in vs, and the droſſe is more winnowed out, and the heart is more cleanſed from it. So much ſhall ſerve for this, that whoſoever will come to the *Lord* in prayer, muſt ſanctifie him in his heart, that is, he muſt come with a holy, and with a pure heart. Wee have ſhewed what this holineſſe, and pureneſſe is, wherein it conſiſts, and likewiſe how the objection is anſwered, that might deceiue us. So much for that property. I

Simile.

Vertue gets ſtrength by wounds.

Simile.

I muſt adde another, you ſhall find it *Phil.*4.6. whenſoever you come to make your requeſts to the *Lord*, this is another condition that he requires, to be thankfull for the mercyes you have received already: *in all things*, ſaith hee, *let your requeſts bee made knowne to the Lord, with thankſgiving*: as if he ſhould ſay, take heede of this, that whenſoever you come to put up any petition to the *Lord*, you forget not the duty of thankfulneſſe, but ſtill when you come to aske any thing that you want, remember that you give thankes for that you have. Beloved, this condition muſt not be omitted: you ſee the *Lord* himſelfe puts it in very carefully, *Let your requeſts bee made knowne with prayer, and ſupplication, and with thankſgiving*. There is much reaſon why our petitions, and requeſts ſhould be accompanied with thankſgiving to the *Lord*: for is it not reaſon when you come to aske ſomewhat for your ſelves, that you ſhould doe that alſo that is acceptable to *God*? Will a man ſerve himſelfe altogether, to come meerely to aske the thing he wants? This a man may doe out of love to himſelfe, out of reſpect to himſelfe, but you muſt remember to doe ſomething that is pleaſing and acceptable to the *Lord*. And therefore you ſhall finde in the old law, they were commanded ſtill to come with peace Offerings, that is, Offerings, wherein they expreſſed thankfulnes, whenſoever they had any ſpeciall requeſt to the *Lord*, you ſhall find that was the manner in *Levit.* and other places, that ſuch a man as came to requeſt any thing,

6. Condition required in prayer, is Thankfulneſſe. Phil.4.6.

Note.

thing at the *Lords* hands, might not come empty handed: and what should he bring with him? a peace offering: what was that? thankfulnesse for that peace he had enjoyed, that was a peace offering; for peace is a generall word comprehending all kinde of mercies. For what is our health, but the peace of our humours within? what is our cheerefulnesse, and joy, but the peace of conscience within? all the comfort we have in our name, and state, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I say, whensoever thou commest with a petition, forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thanksgiving to the *Lord*, for that which thou hast received; doe somewhat that is acceptable to him, as well as seeke for that which is usefull for thy selfe. Beloved, there is much reason for it; because, if a man be poring on his wants still, if it be in his mind, when he comes to call upon *God*, it will indispose him for spirituall performance, it will beget murmuring, and sowrenes, and discontent, it will imbitter his spirit: when as a man remembers many mercies that he hath received, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it sweetens his spirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts those graces that are in him, it drawes him nearer to the *Lord*, it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition that he is in: wheras, on the other side, forgetfulnesse of mercies, when a man is onely intent vpon his petition to have the thing done, he breakes many times into that sullennesse of disposition,

All mercies reduced to peace.

If we look only on our wants, wee cannot be thankfull.

Simile.

diſpoſition, that we finde in children, that, when they cannot have all that they would, they throw away that which they have; ſo that is our fault many times, when wee come and ſeeke to the *Lord* for any thing that we neede, wee are ſo intent upon that, that we forget all the mercies wee have received, as if they were nothing: the *Lord* would not have it ſo, but will have us remember what wee receive, that wee may be content to want, that our hearts may bee brought to patience, and contentment, under the croſſe, and to want what it ſhall pleaſe him, for a time, to deny us; as *Iob* reaſoneth, ſaith he, *I have received good from the Lords hands*, (it is his anſwer to his wife) *and ſhall I not receive ill?* So, if a good man be thankefull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe ſo, it will make him content with that preſent want: for he lookes to that which hee hath had in hand. When a man ſaith thus with himſelfe, thus, and thus much good I have received at the *Lords* hands: What though I want ſuch a thing? What though I be preſt with ſuch an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it, I ſay, the *Lord* lookes for this; expoſtulating with him, and murmuring againſt him, is not a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, but when a man ſo askes, that withall he is content to be denied, if his good pleaſure be ſo. Now, thankfulneſſe for mercie, makes us ready to be ſo affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to reſigne our ſelves to the *Lord*; and therefore he will have thankfulneſſe to goe with it, when-

The ſight of ſome good received will make us content to want.

whenſoever wee come to aske any things at his hands. And therefore obſerve, that whenſoever you come to ſeeke the *Lord*, you be thankefull for the mercyes you have had, remember them; for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requeſts. Thankfulnes is (as it were) the incenſe, that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the *Lord*, ſo much the ſooner. Prayer goes up without incenſe, when we offer up our petitions without thankfulneſſe; becauſe that is a ſacrifice, as you know it is called the *calves of our lippes*, and ever when you joyne thankefulneſſe with your petitions, it is like a ſacrifice mingled with it, that helpes to prevaile with you.

7 Condition required in prayer, is, to come in the name of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt.

The next condition is, and it muſt not be forgotten, of all the reſt, that we come to the *Lord*, *in the name of Ieſus Chriſt*. This is a thing commonly knowne, you will ſay, who knowes not that, except we come in the name of Chriſt, no petition can be acceptable? Beloved, I ſay to you in that caſe, as the Apoſtle *Iames* ſpeakes, *Iames* 4: where he gives this rule, that we ſhould ſay, *If the Lord will, we will doe ſuch and ſuch a thing to morrow, &c.* And when the anſwere would be ready, who knowes not this? ſaith he, if you know the will of the *Lord*, and doe it not, your judgement ſhall be greater; ſo I ſay, if any doe not practiſe this, (and it is a thing we are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a cuſtomary manner, but to doe it in good earneſt, as wee ought to doe it, therein

Iam 4.

therein commonly wee come short) you know how great a sinne it was, in the old law, to offer without a Priest; in the 17 of *Leviticus* it is said there, if any man brought his Sacrifice, though it were the best sacrifice and the choise, yet, saith the text, *if he did not bring it to the Priest, and to the Altar, but slay his sacrifice else-where, without a Priest, such a man was guiltie of bloud, and was to be cut off from his people*; that is, hee was to be cut off by the Priest, by excommunication, and after by the civill Magistrate. You know, it was *Vzziahs* fault to offer incense, when it was proper to the Priest to doe it. The same sinne we commit when we come to the *Lord*, and thinke, because wee have repented, and prayed fervently, because wee thinke, our hearts and spirits are in a good disposition, because we know no sinne, of which we are conscious, for this cause we thinke that wee shall bee heard. It is true: the *Lord* requyres these qualifications, in the party, when hee prayes; but take heede of thinking to be heard for this, this is to offer without a Priest. You must come thus to the *Lord*, and say thus unto him, *Lord*, I confesse (notwithstanding all this) I am unworthy, I haue nothing in me, why thou shouldest regard mee, it cannot be, that either I, or my prayer should be acceptable, but I beseech thee, take them at the hands of CHRIST, our *High Priest*, he that is *entred into the veile*, he, that takes the *prayers of the Saints*, and *mingles them with sweete odours*; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

In what manner to come to God.

doe this, with dependance upon Christ, and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a sacrifice to him; and this we must carefully remember; and therefore we see an excellent expression of this in *Levit.* 5. where this is made cleare to you, that it is not any excellency in the person, nor any fervency in the prayer, nor any pureness, or holiness that is found in him, nothing that comes from man, that causeth his prayer to be acceptable, but it is the Priest, in that place from vers. 8. to the 11. You shall finde there the law was, that he that came to sacrifice, *must bring a sheepe, or a shee goate*; but if he were not so rich as to doe so, he was able enough to bring *two turtle Doues*; yet if he were not able to doe that, then saith the text, *He shall bring the tenth part of an Epha of fine flowre*, (a very small thing) and saith he, *let him giue it to the Priest, and he shall make an attonement for him, and his sin shall be forgiven.* Whence I observe this, that it is not the goodness of the sacrifice, the price, nor the choisnes, nor the excellency of that, when they came with a thowsand Rammes, and so many sheepe, and bullocks, (as you reade of many great sacrifices, that were offred by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an Epha of fine flower, which was exceeding little, this prevailed fully as much; it shewes evidently, that it is not in the sacrifice, but the poorest, and the smallest, and the meanest sacrifice will prevaile with *God*, as well as the richest, and the greatest. What is the reason? For, saith he, it is the Priest, that must offer it, hee makes

Levit 5. 11

Our prayers are not heard for any excellency in them, but for Christ.

makes it acceptable; So in this case, let the sacrifice be never so meane, yet if it be Christ, that offers the sacrifice, if it be commended to the priest, and he offers it, the *Lord* will accept it. You shall find that rule, *Levit.* 5. 11. *He that brings a sacrifice,* (this caution was given) *he must put no incense to it, neither oyle* But should the sacrifice be offered without incense? No, you shall find in *Levit.* 16. that alwayes, *the Priest* when he entred into the *Holy of holiest*, he *burnt incense, that the cloud of that incense, might cover the Mercy seate*: the meaning is this, that when any man comes to offer a prayer to the LORD, he can put no incense to it, the priest only he must put in incense, that is, *Iesus Christ* onely must offer the sacrifice, wherein the *Lord* smells a savour of rest: for the *Lord* expresseth himselfe in this manner, as if he were disquieted for sinne, and can take no rest; now, when *Iesus Christ* offers a sacrifice, he smells a savour of rest; becaufe it comes from him, in whom he is well pleased: so, I say, we must be carefull, that we remember we come in the name of Christ.

Levit. 5. 11.

Levit 16. 13. Christ must put incence to our prayers.

But, you will say, every man doth so, and how shall we know it?

Obiect.

You shall know it by this, if you have boldnesse, and confidence, that is an argument that you looke not upon your selves, but upon *Christ*. When a man is so exceeding timerous, and doubting, and fearefull, that he dares not come to the throne of grace, or, if hee doe, yet he makes a great question, whether he shall be heard or

Answ.

How to know when we come in our owne names in prayer.

or no, this is too much looking to himselfe, here, the high priest is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carrie thee out, it will breede boldnesse in thee, it will breede confidence: if thou come in the name of Christ, and offer up thy prayers through him, it will cause thee, in every petition thou putteſt up, to thinke thy selfe so much beholding to Christ, that thou wilt be ready to say, in thy heart, whensoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke *Iesus Christ* for this. When a man, I say, shall bee so much put upon his score, it will make him so much indebted to the LORD *Iesus* for his sinne that is remitted, and this Petition that hee hath granted, that his heart shall be more inlarged to thankfulnesse, when he is able to consider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to say with himselfe, If *Iesus Christ* had not dyed, if I had not had such an high Priest, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apostle saith *Heb. 9. To make intercession for me*, I had lost this benefit, I had never come to have put up a prayer to the *Lord*, or, if I had, it should not have been heard.

What required in the heart that comes to God in Christs name.

Heb 9.

Obiect. But you will say to mee, If we be heard for Christ; then though a man be sinfull and though hee have none of the precedent conditions, though he have not that holinesse that is requyred, if the Priest make him acceptable, why may he not hope as well as the most holy man?

Answ. I answer, briefly, though the Priest give all acceptance to the sacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there are

Two things requyred in our sacrifice.

are two things beſides required, that the perſon that brings the ſacrifice, be cleane; no impure perſon was to bring a ſacrifice: ſecondly, that the ſacrifice be without blemiſh; he that hath a male, and brings a female, is curſed: So this is required, that the *perſon* be *righteous*, and that the *prayer* be *fervent*, ſuch as is indited by the helpe of *Gods* Spirit, that it may be a ſacrifice fit for the *Lord*. But now, that we have from *Chriſt*, is this, that though the perſon be ſo, and the prayer thus qualified, and have thoſe forenoted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable without the Prieſt. And therefore this ſhould encourage you, when you conſider the glorious *God*, his holineſſe, that great diſtance betweene him and you; and your ſelves, on the other ſide, how vile and ſinfull you are, and unfit to come and put up your requeſts to him; now, when you thinke of a Mediatour, of an high Prieſt, who is entred into heaven, who is gone thither, and ſits at the right hand of Majeſtie, making interceſſion for you, when you conſider there is one high Prieſt, who is able to prevaile, not like the Prieſts in the law, but one that is over the houſe of *God*, one that is the very ſonne, that is not entred in through the blood of Bulls, and Goates, but with his owne blood; when out of this you ſhall receive confidence, and come neere him with boldneſſe, this is to make uſe of Chriſt, and to offer ſacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you have conſidered all the conditions mentioned, and fitted your prayers accor-

The perſon muſt be holy, and the prayer fervent.

How to make uſe of Chriſt as our Prieſt.

ding to them, that you be confident, and expect much, that when you have prayed, you may say thus, *Lord*, I expect now the granting of them, thou canst not now deny them; *Lord*, I will wait now. And this is our fault, when we have prayed, and the thing comes not presently, wee are ready to give over, we are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing specially to bee remembred, we must so farre magnifie our praiers, wee must set a price upon them so farre, and so esteeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they will bring the thing to passe. If a man take a drugge, or a medicine, or an herbe, and use it to a wound, or a disease, once, or twice, or thrice, and if hee see it doth no good, he will lay it aside, and take another medicine: for, saith he, I have tryed it, and it will doe me no good: so a man doth with his prayers, he saith, I have sought to the *Lord*, I have prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted mee; and therefore hee is ready to lay it aside, as if it were not effectuall, and to take another meanes: this neglect of prayer is not to know the force of the medicine. You must know therefore of what efficacie prayer is, and trust it, and not give over, (for it is effectuall to bring the thing to passe) and make not haste, but stay, and waite. It was *Sarahs* fault, when *Abraham* and shee sought to the *Lord* for a sonne, she made too much haste to give *Hagar* to *Abraham*, when they should have stayed till the *Lord* had done it his owne way. So *Rebeccah*, there was a promise, and no doubt,

Waiting in prayer required.

Simile.

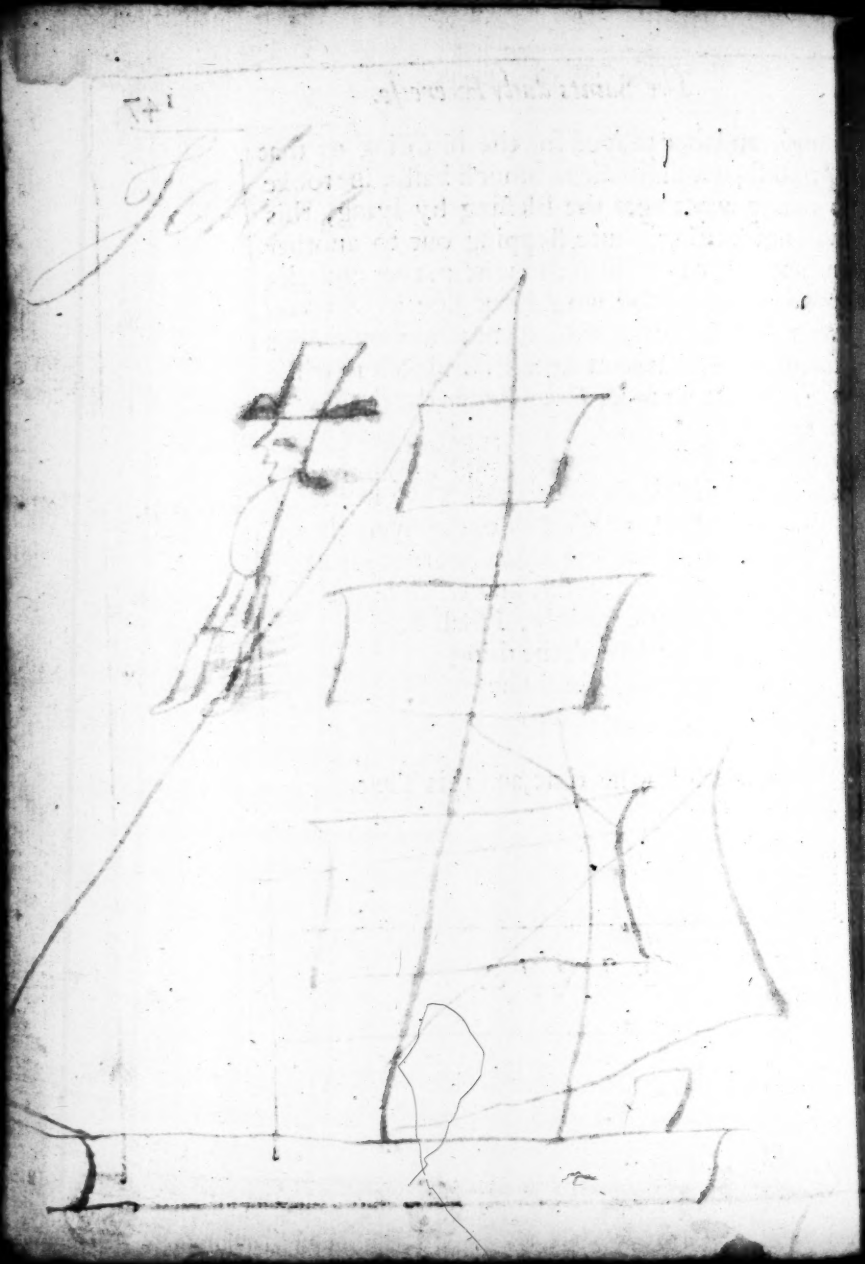
Instances of being overhasty after prayer

Iacob

Iacob, and shee prayed for the fulfilling of that promise; but she made too much haste, she tooke a wrong way to get the blessing by lying, this was not waiting, but a stepping out to another meanes; because they thought prayer and dependance upon *God* would not doe it. So *Saul* would not waite upon *God*, but he would offer sacrifice, this was to make hast. And so it is, when a man is discouraged; *David*, when the thing was not presently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a desperate complaint, saying, *One day I shall fall by the hands of Saul.* Take heede of this, and when wee offer up our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to trust them, and to depend, and waite upon *God*, say certainly, I shall not be denied, the thing shall surely be granted. 1 Sam. 27. 1.

So much for this time, and this Text.

FINIS.



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